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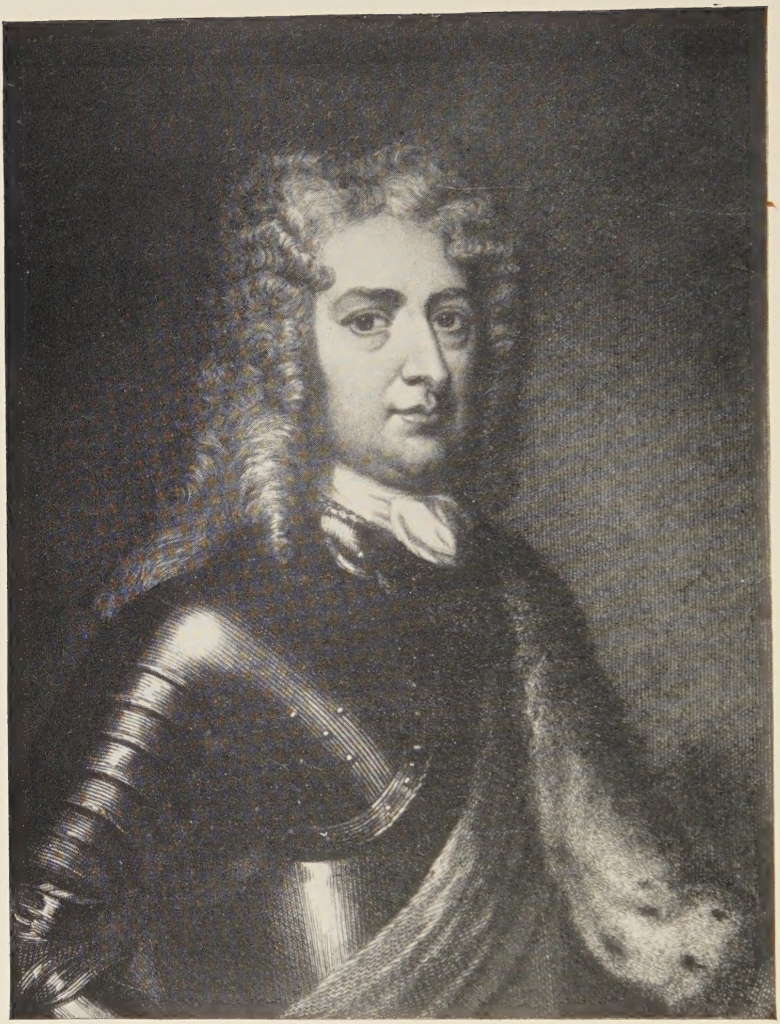

MARLBOROUGH

From a painting by Kneller. Engraved by J. Posselwhite

Marlborough

The Portrait of a Conqueror

By

Donald Barr Chidsey

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To
MY MOTHER

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

DONALD BARR CHIDSEY was born May 14, 1902, in Elizabeth, New Jersey, and was educated in the public schools there. Since 1920 he has been in newspaper work, in a variety of capacities, and in many parts of the United States—New York City, Elizabeth and Newark, New Jersey, Denver, Colorado, and Jacksonville, Florida—and in Paris, France. He is the author of *Bonnie Prince Charlie*. His work has also appeared in the old *Smart Set* Magazine, the *American Legion Monthly*, the *New York Sunday Times Magazine*, *The New Yorker*, *Judge* and *Life*.

INTRODUCTION

HE did everything well. He was an admirable lover, and later a faultless husband; he was a clever politician, a great diplomat; in an age when competition made traitors skillful, he was one of the best; he was an expert swordsman, a graceful equestrian, a crack tennis player, an excellent dancer. . . .

But genius may be defined as not just the ability to do a thing better than most men can do it (which is mere talent), but as the ability to do things other men cannot do at all, things not previously considered possible. Marlborough's talents were numerous; but his genius was confined to the military; he was one of the greatest generals of all history; perhaps he was *the* greatest.

It is strange that he does not loom larger in the popular imagination. For he was a fascinating man who was married to a fascinating woman, and who led a life packed with excitement.

He was also a good business man. In this it is easy to compare him with our own American heroes, the self-made millionaires; for he started with nothing and died the richest man in three kingdoms, and to the end he preserved the first coins he had ever earned, anticipating a present-day tradition.

He had good manners. So many great men were brusque, sharp persons that it is pleasant to record the life of one who never raised his voice, never lost his temper, and was always (however hypocritical it may have been) graciousness personified.

So different he was in appearance, too, from what you might have expected. Here was a man who laid waste all Bavaria, commander-in-chief of half the armies and navies of Europe for a decade of bitter war; a man at the mention of whose name thousands of peasants would tremble, while nursemaids invoked him as a bogey with which to frighten their charges into good behavior. Here he was: tall, handsome, mild-mannered, with innocent baby blue eyes and a girlish voice—the perfect gentleman, patient, kindly, a lover of animals, a devoted husband and father.

He could endure hunger, cold, shipwreck, slaughter, imprisonment, disgrace, exile, the fevered encomiums of emperors and great kings—without lessening or broadening his quiet smile. He could fight all day in a pouring rain, sword in hand at the head of his regiment—fight savagely, relentlessly, against a savage and relentless foe. Yet when the fighting was finished he could rival the daintiest dandy in a dandies' paradise.

At the court of Charles the Second, in which he was raised, adultery was taken for granted, morning sobriety was almost unknown and great ministers (like Shaftesbury) signed state papers without stirring from the basset table. Yet the Great Duke didn't gamble; he didn't drink; and he was a faithful husband who after more than a quarter-century of marriage literally worshiped his wife.

And that wife! What more exquisite contrast does the history of matrimony offer? There are students who believe that Sarah Jennings was the real genius of the two, and that the subject of this book would have been little enough except for her. It is a guess at best—though a fascinating one.

I have my opinion; and I hope you will have yours when you have finished with this tale.

For the rest, I trust this does not sound as though it were going to prove an apology for Jack Churchill. He was above apology. Certain brilliant writers—notably Thackeray, Swift, and Macaulay, a formidable trio!—have been overharsh with him, so that he has been popularly painted as a mean man. Others, like Coxe, Campbell, and the anonymous author of *The Lives of Two Illustrious Generals,* perhaps blinded by Marlborough's near magnificence, have praised him like obsequious courtiers around an Oriental suzerain; and author-soldiers, like Alison, Wolseley, and Lloyd, seem so carried away by enthusiasm for his military achievements that they have been unable to believe some of the scandals of his private and political life.

Mean he was, where money was concerned. Traitorous he was, too. And dishonest. At least, he was all these if you glance down his record and judge him by modern standards. But to do this is preposterous. There are ways and ways of judging men; and it may be that the safest plan is not to judge them at all, leaving this function for Somebody better qualified to perform it. If you look at Jack Churchill from different angles, you find different men. If you look at him from all angles (as I am trying to do, but it's a confusing business), you find still another man.

He was, in fact, like most of us, many persons in one; and a life which started in the days of Oliver Cromwell, extended through the whole Restoration period, embraced the Revolution of 1688, the War of the Spanish Succession, and the entire reign of Queen Anne, and ended only after the Hanoverians had settled their ponderous posteriors upon the

throne of Great Britain and Ireland—this life gave him ample opportunity to display each of those persons.

So that you might call this not so much a biography as a collection of biographies crushed together. I confess that the effect is a bit bewildering. I am sorry. But do remember that I didn't make the history here recorded, and that when Jack Churchill undertook to outdo the traditional cat one (or two) better, there was nothing I could do to stop him.

This is a book compiled rather than originally conceived. It is a parasite's job, resting upon the labor of other men, worthier students. Yet that very fact argues for the accuracy of the information hereinafter offered. At the end you will find a list of the principal authorities. Basic among these are Coxe, Lediard, Banks, Burnet, the soldier-diarists and memoir-writers, and the hacks who wrote Sarah Jennings's *Conduct* for her. Burnet has been accepted literally by many historians, while the *Conduct* has drawn sneers from these same scribblers. Yet the Bishop was quite as prejudiced as the Duchess; and it is the rankest inconsistency in the world to accept one of these authorities and reject the other. I have not placed much faith in either, for both were persons of strong party and personal prejudices, and each was intent upon giving posterity his own view of great events.

Marlborough's letters and those of his wife have been preserved at Blenheim Palace, and these were of the greatest value. The work of the Right Honorable Sir George Murray in classifying and editing them cannot be overpraised: the whole story of the War of the Spanish Succession is told in the five fat volumes he has published. Toward the end of that war, at least, Marlborough's political enemies were opening his mail—a fact of which he was aware, so that in some

respects his letters of this period are guarded, in some respects perhaps deliberately misleading. Other epistles, notably a few to Godolphin, were intended only to be shown to the Queen as an evidence of the Duke's devotion to her interests. But most of them are genuine expressions of feeling, and may, I think, be taken as true lights upon the times and situation and upon the character of the man himself.

Contemporary soldier-writers—Captain Parker, glum Colonel Blackader of the Cameronians, Sergeant Millner, and the Frenchman, de la Colonie—have contributed interesting glimpses but no material of importance. The reason is that the Duke's underlying motives were rarely known to anybody but himself, and even his aides were set wondering when this genius began to function. Later writers—Fortescue, Sheppard, Lloyd, Wolseley, Alison, Atkinson, Walton—have pointed out facts and reconstructed situations which would not otherwise have been easily understood by a layman; they have been of great assistance.

Pamphleteers and political writers of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, anonymous or otherwise, are not to be believed. They wrote for hire, or out of partisan spite, with no regard for the fullness of truth.

Into this class, unfortunately, falls Lord Macaulay. In the case of Marlborough he takes almost without reservation the word of these very political writers who were prepared to set down anything the imagination could devise or the law be strained to permit, so long as it was vituperative of the Great Duke. Macaulay hated the memory of Marlborough, hated everything the man stood for, as brilliantly and as blindly as he worshiped William of Orange. All this would hardly be worth mentioning, were it not that from

Macaulay the average man gets whatever opinion he has of Marlborough. Macaulay, more than any other individual, made seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century English history—and made it after his own image.

Ward, Macpherson, Halliday, Wilkins, and Melville, but particularly Ward, have straightened out many of the popular misapprehensions concerning the present ruling house of Great Britain and the circumstances attending its removal from Herrenhausen to Whitehall.

Of course Pepys and Evelyn have helped. They were the best reporters of their day, Pepys especially. A thousand times the historian wishes he could, like a newspaper editor, assign old Sam Pepys to cover a story; for the fellow missed nothing. De Grammont, too, should be mentioned in this paragraph, though he was less reliable than the other two.

Of the actual biographies of John Churchill, a comparatively recent one by Edward Thomas, though little more than a sketch, is perhaps the liveliest. Alison's is the nearest complete; Atkinson's and Wolseley's are the best military appreciations. It is most unfortunate that General Wolseley died before he had finished his work—in fact, just as he had reached the most interesting part of it. He was overkind to the Duke in many respects; but he did him strict justice as a soldier.

May, 1929
Jacksonville, Florida

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MARLBOROUGH

CHAPTER ONE

She Falls to Rise

OLIVER CROMWELL having died, and his son Richard having made a mess of the Protector's job, England abruptly decided that kings were not so bad after all. The two sons of Charles the First were recalled from France; they arrived with much pomp, and the older was crowned Charles the Second. Mourning bands and black crêpe hangings were put into storage, and all England blossomed forth in gay ribbands again; adultery and heavy drinking were suddenly back in fashion, along with light poetry, equally light drama, and a multitude of other charmingly frivolous things; laughter was not only permitted but encouraged; and you could do just about anything you pleased on Sunday.

The new monarch, amiable, clever, and devoted to wine and women and witticisms, was promptly surrounded by needy Cavaliers who had lost their all in the royal cause and who now petitioned for suitable reward.

One of these was Winston Churchill. He had quit his studies at Oxford to battle the Roundheads right gallantly as a captain of horse, side by side with his father. The family fortune, such as it was, had been gobbled up by the victors and Winston had been obliged to rear his numerous progeny under his mother-in-law's roof, Ash House in Axminster.

There were more gentlemen to be rewarded than there were rewards to go round, and the best the new king could at first do for Winston was a grant of arms. The motto which

the impoverished gentleman selected was *"Fiel pero Desdichado"*—faithful but unfortunate.

Unfortunate he was. It must have been thrilling to flaunt both arms and a crest, not to mention the motto; but he had a large family and no job.

They finally found for him an appointment to the Court of Claims assigned to adjudicate property disputes in Ireland. The court sat in the old Kings Inns, Dublin. Winston, returning to England a few years later, in January of 1663, was knighted—Sir Winston Churchill. The following year he was made Junior Clerk Comptroller of the King's Household. He went back to Ireland on more property cases in 1665 and 1666. Still later he was created Eldest Clerk Comptroller of the Green Cloth and then Second Clerk of the Green Cloth in Ordinary.

Big titles. But they brought very little cash. The children remained—not starving, but not very well provided for. The logical thing to do was to place them in some great household, or in the army, the navy, or the Church. The oldest, Arabella, was made a lady-in-waiting to the wife of the younger of the two royal brothers—James, Duke of York. And here our story legitimately begins.

It is well begun at the moment when, shortly after this appointment, a horse missteps and throws its rider. The rider is Arabella. But in order to understand the significance of this incident it is important that you first be reminded of the personal qualities of James Stuart and his brother the King.

A stranger pair it would be difficult to find. Their careers had been similar; there was no great difference in their ages—Charles was thirty and James twenty-seven at the time of the Restoration; they had the same family name and the same

mother and father; and each believed with all his heart in the divine right of kings. There the list of likenesses comes to an end.

Charles hated work, and his wit was properly celebrated; James labored with a dour persistence, very hard, all the time, and had no humor at all. To Charles, religion was a rather tiresome formality that interrupted his play; James took religion seriously and was so High Church that he was even then suspected of Roman Catholic leanings. The King was one of the best politicians in history; his brother was one of the worst.

Charles was popular, vices and all. He had the faculty of always doing the lovable thing, and good-nature was his most conspicuous characteristic. James was unpopular: some men admired him but nobody loved him. They say that once James remonstrated with his brother about the lack of a royal bodyguard, and Charles retorted: "Don't worry, Jamie—they'll never kill me to make *you* King!"

Both had the family weakness for women. But here again their tastes differed widely. Each strove with laudable patriotism to populate his nation: each had a goodly number of children, most of James's and all of Charles's being illegitimate. But the mothers of these children fell into two sharply defined classes. Charles's mistresses were beautiful, shapely, voluptuous, vivacious, and usually not overstocked with brains. James's, almost invariably, were witty creatures, but skinny and ugly. Charles used to say that he thought James must be doing penance for past sins by dallying with such females: he could account for it in no other way.

Even in marriage, where a royal personality rarely has opportunity to assert itself, these brothers displayed great

dissimilarity. Charles came to the throne a bachelor. It was advisable that he marry a Protestant, and Henrietta Marie, daughter of the Princess of Orange, seemed the likeliest candidate. But Charles would have nothing to do with her because she had refused him on the Continent when he had no apparent chance to recover his throne—a refusal which the Princess's mother, after the Restoration, would have done anything to retract.

Matchmakers murmured the names of various Germans. But Charles turned away. " 'Od's fish! They are all fat and foggy! I will have none of them."

The choice fell upon Catharine of Braganza, third daughter of the Queen Regent of Portugal. Portugal, her freedom from Spain but recently achieved, was eager to strengthen her position by this alliance. Spain, of course, and France, for reasons too numerous and too complicated to give here, opposed the match. Charles waived the politics, waived even the religious question—for Catharine was a strict Catholic who had spent most of her life in a convent. What Charles wanted to know was whether or not she was good-looking.

The Portuguese ambassador swore that Catharine was a dazzling beauty. The French and Spanish ambassadors declared that she was ugly beyond description and possessed of a perfectly frightful figure. A portrait finally settled the matter. It showed Catharine to be the flower of beauty described by the Portuguese ambassador.

However, when she arrived in the flesh it was found that she did not live up to that picture. Even good old Sam Pepys, always gallant, damned her with faint praise—"though she be not very charming, yet she hath a good, modest, and inno-

cent look, which is pleasing." She had a brilliant dark olive complexion, good hands and arms, and beautiful dark brown hair which was originally dressed in preposterous horizontal curls down the sides of her head. But she was short, her figure was dumpy. Her upper front teeth protruded, pushing out the upper lip. She had a pretty foot and ankle, and tried in vain to set a fashion for short skirts in England. She also is remarkable as the first English queen with a taste for tea, then a fad from China.

As she spoke no English and Charles no Portuguese, they had to get along as best they could in Spanish. They quarreled considerably at first, and he was unfaithful to her from the beginning. But her innocence and virtue (extraordinary attributes in those days at the English court) fascinated the King. Sometimes he would undertake to give her lessons in English, teaching her obscene words and phrases which she would repeat, ignorant of their meaning, before her ladies, to the delight of the frolicsome Charles.

With James it was different. Devoted to Anne Hyde, a woman of noble but not royal blood, he married her soon after the Restoration and in spite of bitter opposition. She bore him several children, the first only a few months after their marriage. She was a strong-minded woman who grew fat early and took to religion. She made James a good wife; and in spite of his infidelities, which were almost as numerous as those of his brother, he appeared to be really fond of her.

It was in the household of Anne Hyde, now Duchess of York, that Winston Churchill contrived to place his oldest child. It was while riding to the hounds, with the Duke and Duchess and other members of the household, that Arabella Churchill was thrown from her horse.

The fall was a momentous one for England. For it happened that James was riding near by and was one of the first gentlemen to reach the side of the lady. James, you will remember, had a weakness for skinny and ugly women; and Arabella was all bones and far from pretty. She lay in a half-swoon (which may or may not have been simulated) while James himself attended her. He found her much to his liking; very solicitously, when she had recovered, he helped her remount.

The gossips buzzed. And for once they were right. Soon after this incident which brought her to his attention, Arabella Churchill was cordially invited to the Duke's bedchamber, and it was suggested that she come alone.

Of course she did. They thought differently of those things in the seventeenth century. If a lady had an opportunity to become a great duke's mistress, then surely she should snatch at it, thanking her stars. She would be a fool to refuse. And Arabella Churchill, whatever else she might have been, was no fool. Very soon she was receiving congratulations on her first pregnancy—for this established the liaison.

A year or so later the oldest Churchill boy, Jack, was appointed a page in the household of the Duke of York. There is no proof that Arabella's influence obtained this appointment for him, but it is fair to assume that it did.

Jack was fifteen years old at the time—a handsome lad with a well-turned leg, quiet, observant and possessed of a decided taste for the military. He is our subject.

CHAPTER TWO

Battlefield and Bedroom

HE was born in Ash House—a typical old English home in a typical English countryside. His mother was a Drake, and the Drakes were somebodies in Axminster; from a junior branch of that family had sprung Sir Francis Drake, the sea hawk of Elizabethan days.

From earliest times the district around Ash House had been the scene of wars. Celt and Roman and Saxon had successively fought and bled there. When the Puritans arose this district passed back and forth between adherents of Charles the First and the Roundheads. The countryside was steeped in military tradition.

Yet it was a peculiarly quiet countryside in appearance, and very English. The land was low and flat, sunshine was plentiful, fishing was good. There were many hedgerows. Kine stood knee-deep in fragrant meadow grass. Church bells bonged drowsily, and in summer there was the loud humming of bees.

There is almost nothing to tell about Jack Churchill's early childhood and education. His father was a scholar and probably a rather tiresome fellow.[1] His mother was clever

[1] It has been suggested that the reason why Winston Churchill was sent to Ireland was that Charles, who put up with many a rascal knowingly, could not tolerate a bore. Unquestionably the gentleman was bookish, and probably he was heavy. We know this from his *Divi Britannici: a Remark upon the Lives of all the Kings of this Isle from the Year of the World 2855 unto the Year of Grace 1660*—a fanatical defense of the divine-right-of-kings theory. This work was not published until 1675, more than ten years after Churchill went to Ireland.

but short-tempered and sarcastic. There were twelve children, but only five—Arabella and four of the sons—lived beyond childhood; and apparently only Arabella had any influence upon Jack's career. He was the third child, but his older brother, Winston, died early.

The Reverend Mr. Farrant, rector of Musbury Parish and a stern Anglican, was the boy's first tutor. In Dublin, Jack attended the City Free School, having for teacher the Reverend Dr. Hill, a Fellow of Merton, Oxford. About a year later he returned to England with his father and was entered in St. Paul's School. How long he studied there, and what, if anything, he learned, we do not know. In later life his education was discovered to be that of the average son of a seventeenth-century English country squire—that is, mighty poor from a scholastic point of view. He could read English and French and could write and speak in these languages sufficiently to make himself understood. He could keep accounts well enough to get into trouble about them. But his real education was intensely practical. On battlefield and in bedroom he distinguished himself early; and since fighting and lovemaking, along with politics, were the principal pastimes of that age, he was qualified in spite of a so brief school career to take his place among the great ones of the day.

The good-looking boy did not long remain a page. James, Duke of York, was passionately fond of military display: he loved to review the Household Guards and similar regiments. Young Jack, attending his master at one of these reviews, asked for and was granted a "pair of colors." Probably Arabella's influence had something to do with this.

At fifteen, then, he was an army officer, an ensign in the King's regiment of Foot Guards. That provided him with a

smart uniform, which must have added to his attractiveness. But the boy wanted battle: there was fight in his blood.

No one who felt that way in Charles the Second's time was likely to go unsatisfied. England had recently achieved, as part of the dowry of Catharine of Braganza, the province of Tangier, in Morocco. Intended to secure control of the Mediterranean (this was before England had taken Gibraltar), Tangier proved an expensive and troublesome colony. The Moors were continually in revolt. The place was furiously hot, provisions were scarce, pay was tardy and uncertain, and sickness never ceased. Officers of two sorts were sent to Tangier: the ones whom somebody in authority wanted to get out of the way, and those who, like Jack Churchill, were spoiling for action.

Undoubtedly he got action. Details are lacking; but for the persons in Tangier who wanted to fight, and for the others too, the Moors were a persistent and worthy enemy. Jack was there for two years; and when he returned, to rejoin the household of the Duke of York, he knew something about soldiering.

But his other talents had not deserted him. And his good looks remained too. Men wore their own hair in those days: the Churchill lad's hair was thick and light, and he had definite, well-shaped eyebrows, and long lashes over blue eyes. He was tall and well set. His features were good. There was a wart on his upper lip, but we are assured that this did not detract from his handsomeness. He had a high but smooth and very musical voice. Above all, he had an elegant presence. He was a born diplomat, always polite, always calm. Even Chesterfield, who disliked him, admitted that Jack Churchill "possessed all the graces in the highest degree."

Said graces appealed irresistibly to one Barbara Palmer, who had recently been created Duchess of Cleveland. She was a tall, voluptuous woman with dark brown hair, almond-shaped eyes, exquisite skin, and a fondness for male company. She also had a temper, and a habit of getting her way. For many years she had been the favorite mistress of Charles the Second. Her husband, created Lord Castlemaine, obligingly crossed to the Continent and drank himself to death.

She was no more faithful to Charles than he was faithful to his own wife. Evidently this passionate woman was not going to be faithful to any man unless she found the one who could satisfy her.

She had several children by the King. Their governess was Barbara's cousin, Mrs. Godfrey, who was also the sister of Jack Churchill's mother. It is said that Mrs. Godfrey contrived to have Jack and Barbara meet, calculating that they would attract each other—as, indeed, they did. Presently Jack was receiving congratulations upon his amatory promotion, precisely as his sister, a few years earlier, had received congratulations when she became mistress of Duke James.

It was a glorious thing to be a lover of the King's mistress. It went well with the uniform and the swagger.

But it would be better to have money. It seemed that everybody around him had money. Although he had been reared in an atmosphere of opulence, his family connections were not powerful and his pocketbook was empty, so that in the ordinary course of events he could not expect high honors. He saw simpletons achieve posts of importance merely because they had money. Offices and army commissions were sold in those days, at so much the office or commission. If you had no money you simply didn't get anywhere. Pinheads

could purchase their way to high command while lads like Jack Churchill, who already was a more capable soldier than most of them, were kept down by lack of cash.

He knew the bitter bite of poverty, and knew it early. He never forgot it.

His only chance for wealth lay in marriage. Meanwhile, and until the rich bride was produced, or appeared of her own accord, he was Barbara Palmer's lover, and Barbara was accepting plenty of money from the gay king.

There came an embarrassing scene which almost interrupted the progress of this affair. Somebody (they say it was the Duke of Buckingham, who had quarreled with Barbara) arranged to have King Charles call upon her unexpectedly while she was engaged with her handsome young guardsman in the bedchamber. Whether or not the King actually entered the room we do not know. But we do know that Jack Churchill *left* the room, and that right promptly—some say by a window, and clad only in his underclothes.

However it came about, Jack was very quiet for a time and did not show his face at court. But King Charles was too good-natured to bear a grudge, and in due time the handsome young guardsman ventured to reappear. Meanwhile, Barbara Palmer, for services rendered, had given him £5,000.

Almost any other young man of the day suddenly finding himself possessed of so much ready money would have spent it picturesquely and very rapidly over the gaming tables at Tom King's place, or in the ale pots at Mulberry Gardens, or among the stew-house women of Whetstone Park. But not Jack Churchill. Instead of squandering the sum, this young man invested it at ten per cent. That was the foundation of one of the greatest of English fortunes.

It will be necessary from time to time in the course of this narrative to remind you that moral standards of the seventeenth century were much different from those of today. Nowadays when a man refuses money from a woman it is considered laudable. In those days it would have been considered poor business. The £5,000 was legitimate profit, for the subaltern was an accomplished love-maker; and they reasoned in those days that he was as much entitled to reward for his labors as any carpenter or merchant. And who shall say that he wasn't? Certainly Barbara was attractive, but certainly, too, she was a headstrong female, and the list of her previous lovers makes it clear that she was not easily satisfied.

His new job had many advantages not at first apparent. What Barbara demanded of the King, she got—Queen Catharine to the contrary notwithstanding. Just as the logical way to get at the King was through his favorite mistress, so too the logical way to get at that mistress was through her lover. Jack Churchill had acquired a certain importance in court. He no longer went to personages; they came to him.

Indeed, the future was rosy. Duke James liked this clever young ensign of the Foot Guards, and Duke James probably would be the next king. For Catharine of Braganza was childless. Time after time the nation was permitted to hope that an heir would appear, but time after time the dumpy little Portuguese disappointed. Bitterly she realized that she was failing in her one important duty—the one thing for which she had been brought to England. There was much talk of divorce; but Charles would not tolerate such talk, for if Charles was a poor enough husband in ordinary circumstances, at least he rallied to his wife in all the crises.

While Jack Churchill was fighting the Moors in far Africa, Catharine of Braganza had another miscarriage, and it became evident that this would be the last, and that hope for offspring of the royal pair was dead. The queen was very ill; delirious, she raved that she had become a mother and that the child was ugly. She was apologizing to her husband (whom she loved) for presenting him with such an ugly child. Charles, sitting at the foot of the bed, assured her that it was a handsome child, and that he would always be devoted to it because it was *hers*. The foremost lover of his day was treating his wife as a lady! It must have been an interesting scene.

Next to Charles in the succession was his brother James. The group of rich nobles who governed Parliament and opposed the Crown did not like James. There were several reasons for this. One was that Anne Hyde, the Duchess, had been for some years a Roman Catholic, and on her deathbed on March 31, 1671, formally announced her conversion. It was known that Anne Hyde exerted a great influence over James, and it was feared that James, too, was secretly a member of the Catholic Church.

This, however, was only one of the reasons why the nobles opposed his accession, and not the most important one. James was a stern man. He would brook no interference with his God-given authority as king. He was not one to compromise, like Charles.

Yet it seemed improbable that the Parliamentarians actually could block James from the throne, if Charles's death came before his brother's. Jack Churchill could (and doubtless did) confidently look forward to the time when he would

be a trusted companion of the King of England, Scotland, and Ireland. So he smiled, swaggering.

Perhaps he swaggered too much. Shortly after his return from Tangier, and after the death of the Duchess of York, Jack became engaged in a quarrel with Captain (later Lord) Henry Herbert. What the quarrel was about we don't know. But the gentlemen settled it in the fashion of the day—with small swords in Hyde Park. Jack was wounded twice in the arm; he pinked his opponent once in the thigh; then he was disarmed, and that ended it. Because Jack Churchill was far from inheriting his mother's hot temper, being the calmest of men in all situations, and because after the engagement Captain Herbert was severely censured by the Duke of York and by the King, it is safe, I think, to assume that this affair was not provoked by the guardsman.

In May of 1670, because Parliament would not give Charles money for fear he would become too powerful, the King applied to France. Louis the Fourteenth, a genius for bribery, responded readily enough. Louis desired to invade the Low Countries and extend his kingdom to include all of what is now Flanders, Belgium, and Holland; and as long as Charles needed money, Louis argued, there was no reason why England should not assist in this enterprise. The agreement was that England should furnish 6,000 troops for the campaign. France was to pay all the expenses of the English contingent, and in addition was to allow Charles a big annuity.

So England, deliberately and without any genuine excuse, declared war upon Holland.

One of the first officers to be sent into the fighting was Jack Churchill. Before going, however, he was to take part in a naval engagement. The Duke of York was perhaps the

greatest admiral of his day. It was he who conceived and executed the first plan for an English navy; before his time that navy had been only so many merchant ships chartered and armed in times of war.[2] A great fleet, for which the Duke was largely responsible, set out under his command. Jack Churchill was on the flagship, the *Prince*. They met the Dutch in Southwold Bay and whipped them magnificently. The Duke himself was splashed with blood when several staff officers were killed beside him. What part the Churchill lad played we do not know, but it must have been a praiseworthy one, for he was afterwards promoted to a captaincy over the head of the lieutenant of the company, one Picks.

In this capacity, then, he went to Flanders. At the head of the English contingent was that darling of the court, the Duke of Monmouth, King Charles's handsome and amiable son. The commander-in-chief was Turenne, admittedly the greatest military genius of his generation. War in those days was not the romantic business it had been earlier and later was to become—at least, in the lay imagination. It was a matter of marches and counter-marches; the best strategy was believed to be that which avoided battles, remaining on the defensive, risking little, yet by feints and false movements forcing the enemy into uncomfortable positions. It was a negative sort of business. Complicated campaigns were carefully mapped out, and the slightest deviation from these plans threw the commanding officers into confusion. The impromptu was not anticipated; there was no provision for the unexpected. A man did as he was told to do; and *what*

[2] James was the admiral who ordered an English fleet, at this time, to capture Nieuw Amsterdam from the Dutch. The village was renamed New York in honor of the Duke.

he was told to do had been elaborately laid out on paper many weeks in advance.

The French invested Maestricht on June 7, 1673. Monmouth was permitted to lead the first attack against the outer fortifications. This attack, in which Captain Churchill participated, came off successfully with the taking of a counterscarp and an important half-moon near the Brussels gate. But the following day the Dutch made a sally to recapture the half-moon. The besiegers were caught unawares. Monmouth, with Captain Churchill and a few other gentlemen, sent hastily for reënforcements, and then, throwing away all firearms and drawing swords, dashed to the defense of the fortification.

It was a hot action. But the guardsmen from England, assisted by a few French musketeers who had come up from nearby trenches, recaptured the place and held it until the arrival of reënforcements.

Jack Churchill was the hero of the day. He had fought like a demon. He had been wounded, but the marvel was that he had not been killed a dozen times over. Sword in hand, he had saved the life of the darling, Monmouth. Best of all, King Louis himself had witnessed the action, and he thanked Churchill publicly and promised to commend him to his own monarch. More reason for swagger.

It was the custom then to fight only in Spring, Summer, and early Fall. Roads were impassable the rest of the year, when the armies took up winter quarters and made no attempt to engage one another, while generals plotted intricate plans for the campaign to come.

There was, you might say, a definite *war season*.

The common soldiers and lesser officers were obliged to

endure the hardships of these winter quarters. But the higher officers, and those with good family connections, were usually given leave to return to their homes for the peace season.

So back to London, as soon as it got cold, went our Jack. Barbara Palmer was delighted to have her lover again; he had all his former charms, and in addition he was a hero, so picturesque! The Duke of York was properly appreciative. Churchill was made Master of the Robes, a Gentleman of the Bedchamber, and a lieutenant colonel of the Admiral's Regiment of Foot. He paid 6,000 crowns for the post of Gentleman of the Bedchamber, but Barbara didn't think that excessive.

CHAPTER THREE

Le Bel Anglais

TWENTY-THREE years old, and already he was Somebody. But lack of wealth played against him still. Monmouth, by accident of birth, had been created a duke; and because he was a duke, a king's son, he was wedded to the fabulously rich Lady Anne Scott, a tiny woman whom he did not like at all. And Monmouth, who was also twenty-three years old, was a general.

It was good to be a lieutenant colonel. It would be better to be a general.

Still, he was Somebody. They were telling thrilling stories about him. Arabella continued to rule the Duke of York, who still seemed the likeliest successor to King Charles. Barbara still adored her guardsman, though she herself had slipped somewhat in court influence because of the arrival of certain other beautiful women—Moll Davies and Eleanor Gwyn, actresses; La Belle Stuart, a distant cousin; and Mademoiselle de Querouaille, that ravishing Frenchwoman. Jack's annuity guaranteed him at least £500 a year; his various new high-sounding titles represented a bit more.

And there should be a wealthy marriage ahead. Hopeful Sir Winston was poking among the heiresses. Many a feminine heart fluttered when the story of the attack on the half-moon was told. No doubt about it: this boy Jack was a brave fellow, with plenty of spirit. And Barbara Palmer's prefer-

BARBARA PALMER, DUCHESS OF CLEVELAND

ence for him was in itself proof of his less mentionable abilities. Some wealthy woman should be glad to get a man like that.

Meanwhile, things of importance were happening right in the Duke's household. It had long been whispered that James was a Roman Catholic. The Test Act proved it. The Test Act provided that no person could hold public office who had not taken an oath acknowledging the King to be head of the Church; who did not receive the Sacrament after the rite of the Church of England; and who did not disavow the doctrine of transubstantiation. This left a loophole for the Protestants who were not members of the Church of England—the so-called Dissenters—for against these the Parliament leaders bore no grudge. A Roman Catholic could take an oath acknowledging the King to be head of his own Church. Such a one could receive the Sacrament: it would do no harm to his conscience, however much it might agitate his dignity. But obviously no Roman Catholic could declare against transubstantiation (although Dissenters could do this) and remain a Catholic.

The Duke of York refused to compromise, refused to make a show of being something he was not or of not being what he was. He retired from public life.

He was a Catholic! he must go. But the sailors of the fleet wished him back with all their hearts, religion or no religion, when the Dutch made up for their previous defeat by drubbing the English unmercifully, and then chasing them up the Thames.

Yet James remained a person of importance in England, and probably he would be the next King. So that there was consternation when he began to weary of Arabella Churchill

and to pay court to Lady Susanna Ermine Bellasis. For he was very much in earnest about this Bellasis woman. He wanted (imagine it!) to marry her. She was a widow: my lord had been killed in a duel while drunk. Moreover, she was dangerously ugly. James went so far as to give her a written promise of marriage to protect her from scandal. But Charles was King, and Charles said no.

James was an amorous fellow. Besides, he wanted male issue, for his two surviving children by Anne Hyde were both girls. So he proposed to the Archduchess of Innsbruck, who accepted him. But while James's proxy was on the way to the wedding, the Archduchess received a proposal of marriage from Leopold the First of Austria (whose own wife was dying even while he made this proposal), and deciding that an actual emperor was preferable to a potential king, she married Leopold, leaving a note for James in which she begged him not to be too disappointed. Wars have been waged for less. But James seemed undisturbed, only instructing good Lord Peterborough to find him another bride. Peterborough, equipped with a list of six possibilities, viewed them all before deciding. For the most part they were too plump: James did not like plump women. Peterborough finally selected Marie-Beatrice, fifteen-year-old daughter of the Duke of Modena.

The girl astounded everybody by objecting. She had never heard of England (actually!) and wanted, anyway, to return to the convent where she had been educated. She was beautiful and extraordinarily stubborn. It was only after a series of the most embarrassing scenes that the marriage was performed, Peterborough acting as proxy.

When the day came for going to England, the new

Duchess balked again. Screaming and weeping, she kicked or scratched every one who tried to quiet her. It was two days before she could be prevailed upon to start.

By this time information of the affair had reached England, and the men responsible for the Test Act (who hated James) appealed to the King to put a halt to it.

"You're too late. The thing is done," Charles told them.

Parliament, aghast at the prospect of a second Roman Catholic Queen, petitioned the King to forbid her entrance into England. This Charles curtly refused to do.

Parliament then implored him to proclaim a day of fasting on which all good Protestants should pray for the protection of the realm against this popish bride. Charles, grinning, told them they could fast all they wanted: *he* was going to eat.

She arrived; and she was lovely beyond description. Tall, dark, gracefully curved, dressed in exquisite taste, there was nothing of the expected monster about her. Men who had been prepared to hate her found themselves worshiping; those who had spent many hours in search of something in her life out of which to manufacture scandal, were obliged to admit that she was loveliness and purity incarnate.

Now more than ever did the brothers Stuart show in contrast—Charles, who loved beautiful women, with an ugly wife; and James, who loved ugly women, with a beautiful wife.

Yet James was proud of her. He treated her with great gallantry: it was some weeks before he was unfaithful to her. At first she did not care for him—he was almost treble her age, and a stern man, though handsome. But she came to love him, and made for him an excellent wife, and for his

two daughters an excellent stepmother. To these daughters, Mary and Anne, James introduced her with: "See—I have brought you a new playmate." And in truth the Duchess was childish enough. She was well brought up, and not often given to fits of temper like the one into which she had fallen when the time came for her to start for England; but she had no interest in gambling, drinking, or adultery, preferring instead to romp in the gardens and play little games. Her playfulness must have been infectious; for Sam Pepys tells of coming upon the Duke and Duchess, soon after their marriage, seated on a hearthrug playing "I love my love with an 'A.' " It is difficult to believe this of rigid, gloomy James.

King Charles was forced to make peace that winter, for the Dutch war was unpopular. But he continued to hire out one regiment of horse and two brigades of foot to the French, and when the next fighting season opened Jack Churchill was made a colonel of one of the foot regiments and was sent where he wanted to be—in the front line.

The campaigning that year was not so brilliant as it had been the previous year, nor was Turenne's success so pronounced. One William, Prince of Orange, had rallied the Dutchmen and was conducting a stubborn defense. About 40,000 Frenchmen faced William. About half that number, under Turenne, marched into the Palatinate to fight the Austrians, who were allies of the Dutch. Colonel Churchill went with the latter group. The most notable fighting was around Sintzheim and Entzheim, and Churchill was in the thick of both battles. At Entzheim his regiment made itself conspicuous for its tough fighting qualities, keeping up a furious conflict from nine o'clock in the morning until dark, in a dense fog and heavy rain.

A story is told that Turenne, annoyed when informed that a French officer had lost a certain position to the enemy, wagered a good dinner and a dozen bottles of wine that *Le Bel Anglais*—the goodlooking Englishman—could retake this position with just half as many soldiers as the Frenchman had commanded. He meant Jack Churchill. And he won his wager.

That winter, laden with all the glory available, the young colonel rode back to London. Barbara Palmer was waiting for him.

In addition to Barbara (or perhaps in spite of her) life must have offered much that was pleasant to the hero. There was in the household of the Duke of York a certain happily domestic atmosphere which was necessarily lacking in the official court. The new Duchess, marvelously sweet and sympathetic, got along admirably with her step-daughters. James himself was passionately fond of these two girls, to whom, after his enforced retirement from the admiralty, he was able to give more of his time. They were a jolly and likable pair. Mary was twelve years old, Anne nine. Mary was more Stuart than Hyde. She was tall, slender, graceful, clear complexioned; she was not clever, but even as a girl she had a distinguished presence. Anne was a roly-poly sort of child, pretty and round, with a ruddy complexion, beautiful dark chestnut hair, and good features spoiled a bit by her weak, cloudy eyes; she was very stupid, and threatened to develop into a stout woman like her mother, whom she rather resembled in appearance if not in wit.

The two girls were deeply attached to one another. Their official tutor, Henry Compton, Bishop of London, who had been appointed by King Charles for political reasons (he was

a virulent anti-Catholic, and Charles wanted to reassure the nation that these princesses would be brought up free of all popish influence) was not learned; and the girls were not required to do much studying. Mostly they played with Harriet Wentworth and Anne Trelawney, Elizabeth and Anne Villiers, the pretty Jennings sisters, and their own stepmother. There were dances, and frolics, and daintily produced playlets in which the princesses took parts. There were card games: from an early age both Mary and Anne were fond of basset and omber. There were masquerades.

Altogether it was a gay and variegated life in the Duke of York's household at St. James's, a life removed from the bitter jealousies and intrigues of Whitehall where the King held court, an innocent, care-free, almost a countrified life, in which Jack Churchill, when he came swaggering back from the French wars, must have cut a fascinating figure.

At any rate Sarah Jennings fell in love with him as soon as she met him. And when this happened the whole course of his life was changed.

CHAPTER FOUR

Languors of Love

SHE was beautiful and very hot-headed. She faced the world defiantly, her pretty mouth drawn with disdain, her eyes bright with pride, and her nose tilted arrogantly.

All her features were small, and so, too, was her well-shaped head, which she habitually held a bit to one side—a head exquisitely set upon an exquisite neck which rose from smooth and well-shaped shoulders. She had thick straw-colored hair which glistened with a multitude of wee golden lights. Her hands, her figure, her carriage, were graceful. She was, in short, a lovely thing to see.

Sarah Jennings would have made a wonderful queen. Having been born a commoner, she played a queen's part anyway, treating even royalty with an aloofness which must have been peculiarly exacerbating. She seemed, indeed, to have no respect for anybody at all.

Like Jack Churchill, she was poor. And like him, too, she was in court for the purpose of making a wealthy marriage. She came of a family slightly older than his but of no higher place in the English social scale, and one quite as obscure. Her father, Richard Jennings, was a Royalist and upon the Restoration had been made a member of Parliament from St. Albans. Her mother was the daughter of a Kentish knight.

She, too, owed her introduction into the Duke of York's

household to a sister. Frances Jennings was a lady-in-waiting to the first Duchess of York, Anne Hyde. She was a bit wild, was Frances, but virtuous enough; she married George, eldest son of Sir George Hamilton of Dunnalong, County Tyrone, and a captain of the King's Guards. Before this marriage, however, and while Frances was still a lady-in-waiting, her younger sister frequently visited her at St. James's. There Sarah became a favorite of the Princess Anne, roly-poly Anne, who was four years her junior.

When Richard Jennings died, in 1688, Sarah, who found it impossible to live peaceably with her mother in their Hertfordshire home, accepted a post as maid of honor to the second Duchess of York, who, liking her instantly, permitted her many liberties. Like Frances, the younger sister was the center of a swarm of suitors. But not until Colonel Churchill came swaggering into her life did she lose control of her heart.

She had been born on the very day of the Restoration. She was, therefore, fifteen years old when she met Churchill, and he was just ten years older than she. To-day they would be a high-school girl and a lad just out of college; but in the seventeenth century they were a well-hardened pair—she the cynical and sarcastic court lady, he the tried soldier and veteran man of affairs.

Their affair was a curious one. He started it when he broke into wild protestations of adoration, besieging his beloved with letters that fairly singed the paper upon which they were written. Sarah accepted all this dubiously; and she informed him, time and again, that she did not believe a word he said. With would-be seducers she'd had plenty of experience, the Duke of York himself having ogled her hopefully but without success. Any other woman would have been

in transports of delight to have this handsome and accomplished young colonel at her feet. But not Sarah. Coldly, and with stinging acrimony, she spurned his advances.

This only stimulated him to wilder protestations. "My soull," he called her in his numerous letters. And "my hart." Barbara Palmer was neglected if not forgotten. The liaison which had kept the court buzzing gayly for four years melted, paradoxically, before the frigid stare of a fifteen-year-old girl.

"If happiness can depend upon the esteem and love I have for you, you ought to be the happiest thing breathing, for I have never anybody loved to that heat I do you."

So he wrote. Perhaps the fact that she was not accessible fascinated him. It may have been the novelty of the thing. A loiterer in the tropics of femininity, he was stricken with delight to contemplate (*there*, of all places!) this many-hued iceberg.

Or it may have been that her aloofness struck him as a challenge. Jack Churchill was a fighter, first, last, and all the time. When he started a siege he did not withdraw until the city was taken. If the sight of a superior enemy failed to dismay him, was he to fall prey to discouragement because a mere child did not swoon with delight in his arms?

" . . . by all that is good I love you with all my hart, and I am shure that as long as I live you shall have no just reason to believe the contrary. If you are unkind, I love you so well that I cannot live, for you are my life, my soull, my all that I hold dear in this world. . . . "

She snapped back at him, accusing him of having designs upon her, and forbidding him to soar to such stifling temperatures when he addressed her. " . . . for if you goe on

in that manner I will leave you that moment and never hear you speak more whilst I have life."

Probably it seemed to her that an attractive pauper like Jack Churchill would have only one purpose in making love to her—and that purpose not marriage. It must have seemed so to others at court. It was not an age of idealism.

But he insisted that his love was pure. "Could you see my hart you would not be so cruell as to say that I do not love you, for by all that is good I love you and only you. If I may have the hapyness of seeing you tonight pray let me knowe. . . . "

Perhaps he had the perspicacity to realize that under her haughty exterior there was a heart hotter than any he had yet encountered. She cared. There is no doubt about it. We know now (she herself has confessed it) that she was desperately in love with him from the beginning. But girls on the marriage market are not there to be exposed to real love; and girls in court at the time of Charles the Second were not likely to believe in the sincerity of anybody at all. If Jack Churchill really wanted her, he would stay on his knees for a while. It was a good position for him.

He did stay there, pleading piteously. He must have been a singularly attractive figure, too.

Sarah was supersensitive. Instead of being thrilled, and showing it, she was suspicious. This tall, smiling, blue-eyed officer with the girlish voice and the ingratiating manner that every one admired—was he laughing at her behind her back? Were others laughing at her? She was born to have enemies: she sensed their presence everywhere. Outspoken always, about everything, she knew that she had already caused many persons to hate her. She had a flinty wit, but no

humor. The suspicion that she might be the butt of a joke seared into her brain and heart, so that she feared to show the love she felt.

In one letter, evidently replying to an accusation of hers, Churchill wrote: "I can't imagine what you ment by your saying that I lafed at you at the Duke's side, for I was so fare from that, had it not bene for shame, I could have cried. . . ." When she left, on this occasion, he continues, "I stoode nere a quarter of an hour I believe without knoweing what I did . . . and when I went away I did not get in my cheire [chair], but made it follow me, because I would see if ther was a light in your chamber, but I saw none."

She was as rude to him as she was to every other person, great or small. Perhaps she was even ruder to him. Certainly he had full opportunity for seeing her at her worst: he could not afterwards complain (nor did he) that he had been deceived about her true disposition.

"To showe you how unreasonable you are in accusing me, I dare swaire you yourself will owne that your going from me in the Dutchess' drawing-room did show as mutche contempt as was possible. I may grive [grieve] at it, but I will no more complain when you do it for I suppose it pleases your youmer [humor]."

Most of her replies have been lost. She asked Jack Churchill to burn them, and he did so. Perhaps he would have done so anyway, for Sarah wrote, as she talked, with a disconcerting frankness, and it might be that her letters were embarrassing possessions.

But such letters as there still are, preserved at Blenheim, from Sarah to her lover, are in one strain—harsh, suspicious, accusing.

"I am as little satisfied with this letre as I have been with many others," she writes, "for I said all you will say is only to amaze me and to make me think you have a passion for me, when in reality ther is no such thing."

He replied with another flood of enraptured if ungrammatical epistles. It seemed as though he must mean it. He disarmed the girl because he gave her no lever with which to pry loose a complaint, because he was so intensely devoted, so consistent with his protestations, so much the smitten gallant who had no thought but of her.

This was the state of their affair when the sinister figure of Catherine Sedley appeared on the scene.

Catherine Sedley was a daughter of Sir Henry Sedley, a celebrated wit. She had inherited his brilliance in conversation, and she was to inherit his money: Sir Henry was one of the wealthiest men in the kingdom. The Churchills, poking around in the marriage bag, had pulled out Catherine Sedley, and they were delighted with their inspiration. Sir Henry was complaisant, and of course the lady herself could not be expected to refuse the opportunity to get such an attractive husband.

The families arranged the matter between them, and the Churchills told Jack about it.

Oddly enough, Jack did not share their delight. Here was his great opportunity. With the wealth this marriage would bring, and the court influence it would give him, he could go far—and go rapidly. His own abilities, which were numerous and great, would at last have a chance to be proved. He, too, would be a general. He would lead the men into battle and give a demonstration of what he could do. He would never again feel the sting of poverty.

Yet he paused. For by this time the unexpected thing had happened. This masterpiece of courtly elegance, this perfect drawing-room ornament, the very personification, it would seem, of all the shallowness and deep cynicism of his time and society, had fallen in love.

The Churchills were alarmed and indignant. It was preposterous! Who was this baggage, this fifteen-year-old flirt, who had driven their Jack out of his senses?

Sarah herself, at the first mention of the proposed match, flew into a frightful rage. At once she assumed that she had been correct in her suspicions, that she had been only a pastime for *Le Bel Anglais* while his parents were finding for him the wealthy bride he really desired. She would have nothing further to do with him. She cut him off—forever.

Her family thought this an excellent idea, for they disapproved of Jack Churchill as heartily as Jack's family disapproved of Sarah—and for the same reasons.

What Catherine Sedley thought or said we do not know. She was an ugly woman, long and bony, and she squinted.

All by himself and with no fuss, Jack Churchill decided that he would finish the siege he had begun. He would take beauty and continue to be penniless. He wrote to Sarah, begging her to listen to his version of the whole thing.

She wrote back, advising him to "renounce an attachment which militates against your worldly prospects."

"As for seeing you," she wrote, "I am resolved I never will in private or in public if I can help it."

He replied that his heart "was redy to breake." He swore that "if you command me death, I will dye."

When she refused to receive his letters any longer he

tried to communicate with her through one of her servants, writing a note calculated to soften any woman's heart.

Sarah wrote: " . . . but surely you must confess that you have been the falsest creature upon earth to me. I must own that I believe I shall suffer a great deal, but I will bear it, and give God thanks, though too late I see my error."

The walls were beginning to weaken now. He brought up his heaviest artillery and massed his men for a storming party when the breach should be opened.

The rest of the court could not believe that Churchill was in earnest. Barillon, the French ambassador, a tireless gossip who was acquainted with all the persons concerned, wrote to a friend: "I assure you that he [Churchill] pursues Sarah Jennings, Madam Hamilton's sister, who is the prettiest of the Duchess of York's Maids of Honour, and whom the Duke of York is always ogling. At a ball given by that Princess, Sarah Jennings had a greater wish to cry than to dance. Churchill, who is her lover, says he is in consumption, and that he must have a change of air in France. I wish notwithstanding that I was as well as he is. The truth is, he wishes to get out of this love affair. His father wants him to marry a relation, very rich and very ugly, and will not consent to his marriage to Mademoiselle Jennings. He is believed to be also somewhat worldly himself."

It is worthy of remark that nobody, not even so keen an observer as Barillon, had ever before seen Sarah Jennings with "greater wish to cry than to dance." That was not her usual appearance. Fiercely suspicious, hating the world and the people in the world, she had ventured out just a little—had opened briefly that last little door to her heart. Then she sprang back, wounded. And now she watched him—the man

who had seen into her heart for an instant. He strolled around the dance floor, serenely confident, baby-eyed, the object of flattering glances, while gentlemen took snuff and laughed at the idea of Jack Churchill needing a change of air, and women sneered behind their fans, telling one another that the Jennings baggage had been taken down a peg or two at last.

But he persisted. He swore that he loved her above his own life. He swore it "by all that is holy." He broke off negotiations between his family and the Sedley family, refusing to see Catherine Sedley again. In a letter which breathed humble devotion in every phrase, he implored her to give him one week—only one week—in which to prove that he loved her.

He was granted the week. After that the romance went quietly. What he told her we do not know. But the wound was healed, the girl understood, and she opened again that last little door to her heart. They loved one another. No more misunderstandings, no more quarrels. They were married secretly, with only the Duchess of York for witness. Several months later, when the marriage was announced, no one could understand it. A pair of lunatics! Sarah's mother refused to have anything to do with them, and they went to live with Sir Winston and his wife, in Mintern, Dorsetshire.

CHAPTER FIVE

Beauty and the Beast

FOR some months they lived very quietly. It is difficult to understand how Sarah and the elder Mrs. Churchill, another quick-tempered and sharp-tongued female, managed to get along together; but we hear no echo of scandal. Though the Colonel's military duties kept him in London much of the time, he spent as many days as possible with his bride.

Catherine Sedley consoled herself by becoming the mistress of the Duke of York, succeeding Arabella Churchill, who was retired on a pension. Catherine, as previously mentioned, was bony and ugly; she was therefore to the taste of James, and bore him several children, as Arabella had done.

Soon there was another marriage, and one of even greater importance, in England. Politics, determined to make still more strange bedfellows, had awarded Princess Mary to a grim little personage from Holland.

William of Orange, a seven-months' baby, was born several days after his father's tragic death and while his mother was in deepest mourning. The bedchamber was draped in black, and it was chilly. Nothing could have been more appropriate. William's mother died when he was nine years old; he suffered all his life from asthma; his head was too large for his puny body; he was round-shouldered, almost

humpbacked; but he was a fighter who would stop at nothing, nothing whatever. He wanted to be stadholder of the United Provinces, as his father and grandfather had been before him; and thanks to the influence of good-natured Charles the Second, his uncle, he became stadholder.

Then he wanted to have restored to him his family's hereditary city of Orange, on the Rhone, in France. Louis the Fourteenth was willing to take him as a vassal-prince, but stipulated that William must first marry the Sun King's oldest illegitimate child, the beautiful daughter of La Vallière. William flew into a terrible rage at this suggestion. A bastard! For *him!* He never forgave Louis; and his hatred of the French monarch was the motivating force of his life. William fought thereafter against France not because he was a religious fanatic, and not because he was politically foresighted. He was a Protestant. He did possess more than a modicum of political sagacity. But personal hatred of Louis was what caused him to keep fighting, in battle, in council, everywhere, all the time, against France. That hatred had more to do with the shaping of John Churchill's career than any other emotion except John Churchill's love for Sarah. It was the same hatred that kept the Jacobites at bay. It brought about England's participation in the bloody War of the Spanish Succession. It was a cold, horrible thing that refused to die. Long after the worms were gnawing William's body, long after the Sun King's sun had set, William's hatred was hurling men into conflict, was dictating the policies of nations, was brooding like a raven over gory fields of battle—a spectre pitch black, cold, and without mercy.

He became stadholder, then, and he used his position to organize a league of nations against the growing power of

France. Religion was only an excuse: he fought for Catholic Spain against France, and was delighted to welcome ultra-Catholic Austria into his league. At first it was not easy. Again and again the soldiers of Louis pushed into the Low Countries; again and again William, refusing to surrender in spite of the odds against him, flooded the lands to save them for Dutchmen. He was speaking literally when, pressed by friends to compromise, he gave to posterity the slogan: "I'll fight to the last ditch."

Charles the Second, eager to offset the unrest caused by his brother's conversion, circuitously offered Mary's hand to this young man. William curtly replied that he was in no position to think of taking a wife.

Immediately afterward, however, William thought better of it. His refusal had been foolish. It might incur the enmity of England, and he wanted England for his "Protestant Alliance"; if England threw her weight on the side of France, then the Low Countries were as good as lost. Also, assuming that James had no sons, Mary would in time succeed to the three island crowns. William hastily reconsidered. What sort of woman was this Princess? A gaunt, pale man with thin lips and humpy figure, he demanded a beauty for consort; and she must be tall; and she must agree with him in everything; and she must be this and do that. He asked the English ambassador about Mary. He made other inquiries. Finally, after the war season of 1677 was finished, he went to England to see her for himself. He found her acceptable; he even pretended to be infatuated with her, although she did not pretend to return this feeling. A royal princess, she belonged to her uncle, the King, rather than to her father, who, if he had his

way, would marry her to some great Catholic prince.[1] But the King was good-natured always, and William was insistent. "All right," said Charles, "he shall have his wife." So William, who almost always got what he wanted, sooner or later, was given Mary. She was fifteen years old.

But there were some things, some courses of nature, that even William of Orange could not control. Imagine his fury when it became known that Duke James's second wife, the sweet little Italian, was pregnant! If she bore James a daughter, all would be well. If she bore him a son, then Mary would be removed a considerable distance from the throne. And there was nothing William could do about it.

The wedding was private. It took place on Sunday, November 4, 1677, William's twenty-seventh birthday, in the bride's bedchamber in St. James's palace. Officiating was that same Compton who had earlier been appointed tutor to the two daughters of James. There were present the King and Queen, James and his very obviously about-to-become-a-mother Duchess, "and their attendants." We do not know whether Jack Churchill was one of those attendants; probably he was. Princess Anne was ill (they feared smallpox, which was prevalent around the palace then) and could not be present.

On one side of the Bishop stood Beauty, on the other side the Beast. Mary was tall and exquisitely dignified, very lovely with her thick, dark brown hair and her soft almond-shaped eyes—red, now, from weeping.

William had a long face, literally and figuratively. It was

[1] He had foremost in his mind the Dauphin of France. It was not an extravagant ambition. Mary was possibly the most desirable bride in Europe at the time, from a political point of view. A previous Mary, also a Stuart princess, had married a Dauphin of France: she later became Mary Queen of Scots.

an eagle's face—large, loose mouth, pointed chin, irregular and extraordinarily long teeth, sharp eyes, an aquiline nose. He was pale and very thin, hollow-chested, round-shouldered. Though of average height, he must have looked small in that company, for Mary, Charles, James, and Compton were all rather above the average in inches; and William's disproportionately elongated head, hunched shoulders, and skinny, twisted body made him at all times seem shorter than he was. He kept his head low, coughing nervously: he was forever coughing. His black, lank hair hung down the sides of his face.

King Charles (who was probably drunk) bustled up to the Bishop, crying, with a coy side-glance at Marie-Beatrice's startling figure, "Come, make haste, lest my sister the Duchess of York here bring us a boy before you start—and then the marriage would be disappointed!" William didn't think that was funny at all.

"Who giveth this woman to this man?"

The King cried, "*I* do," accenting the "I." James didn't think *that* was funny.

James was mournful; William was furious; poor Mary's heart was breaking; the Duchess of York, sympathizing with her step-daughter, was herself on the verge of tears. But King Charles enjoyed himself thoroughly.

They came to that part of the ceremony in which the bridegroom did with all his worldly goods endow the bride. Although he was one of the stingiest men in Europe, William, in accordance with the ancient custom, placed some gold and silver coins upon the opened Bible. It was all very solemn—until the King, leaning close to Mary, whispered,

"Gather it up and put it in your pocket while you've got the chance."

There was another jolly old custom in those days: when royal persons were married, the spectators remained with them until they got into bed side by side.[2] When the dramatic moment came this day, His Majesty Charles the Second beamed beguilingly upon the horizontal newlyweds, and then with his own hands drew closed the bed curtains, crying as he did so, "St. George for Merry England!"

The marriage was vastly popular with Protestants, both in Scotland and in England. Persons who rarely took more than two or three drinks at a time, were that night roaring drunk. There were bonfires, salutes of cannon, congratulatory memorials, and all that sort of thing. Everybody was happy except James and his Duchess, and poor Mary. And William; William was never happy.

November 15, the Queen's birthday, was celebrated with exceptional pomp that year, for it was in effect the court reception to the married couple. Mary, ablaze with jewels, struggled again to keep back the tears: she was to sail to dank, distant Holland the following morning, and she was saying farewell to dear friends. Her beloved Anne (the sisters were then passionately fond of one another) was ill and abed, and Mary was not permitted to see her. William was angry because she had refused to move away from St. James's, where he feared the smallpox epidemic, and even more angry because the Duchess of York had borne a son two days after the bedchamber wedding. That child was to die a few weeks

[2] This embarrassing custom was continued until the middle of the eighteenth century. George the Third was the first English king who on the night of his marriage retired unobserved by anybody but his bride—who, parenthetically, was an amiable German lady with a very large nose.

later, but William could scarcely know this. He didn't speak to Mary all night.

Marie-Beatrice tried to comfort her, reminding her that she herself had not even seen James before she was married to him. "Yes, but you were *coming* to England, and I'm *leaving* England," wailed the Princess.

She hated to leave England. She loved the country, and all her friends, and the members of her family. But now the scarlet liveries were to be changed for green and orange, the pleasant corridors of St. James's and Whitehall for the bleak dreariness of The Hague palace, and those gay companions of her girlhood for this one ungracious little Dutchman whom the courtiers already were calling "Caliban" and "The Monster."

As it happened, the winds were unfavorable, and the couple did not depart until more than a week after the reception. By that time William was having an affair with one of Mary's ladies-in-waiting.

Mary removed, England proceeded to go mad. Explanations are not available. The nation seems simply to have been subject to one of those outbursts of insanity which descend every so often upon a people. At such times society shows at its worst, like a man transformed into a beast by drink or drugs; and when the fever has passed, and the immediate causes of it are viewed in the cool of convalescence, they appear preposterously trivial and a knowledge of what they were contributes practically nothing toward a valid explanation of the phenomenon.

It is true that there was at this time a powerful group of wealthy men striving to stir up feeling against the Roman Catholic Church in England. Their motives were purely poli-

tical; they wanted to see the Duke of York cheated of his succession to the throne. But even these men, wealthy, influential, and clever as they were, could not have precipitated the madness which swept the country. It came, to them, like a gift from the skies. They took full advantage of the popular excitement, stimulating it in every possible way. But they did not start it. They could not have started it.

Originally the object of these men had been to persuade King Charles to divorce Catharine and marry some prolific Protestant. Charles had informed them that he would never cast aside a wife merely because she happened to be unable to produce children; he had been unfaithful to her—yes; but in a crisis he always remembered that she was, after all, his wife. The Stuarts had better manners, if not better morals, than the Tudors.

The cry for divorce failing, the Parliamentarians fell back on slander of Queen Catharine and the Duke of York. They were prepared to put into circulation any sort of rumor concerning these two members of the conveniently hated Catholic Church. They played upon Charles's unquestioned popularity by inventing stories of attempts upon his life—attempts supposed to have been made by the Queen and the Duke, abetted, of course, by the Pope.

The stories helped; but obviously they were not sufficient. Not enough people were silly enough, or interested enough, to believe them.

Then came the Popish Plot, a political volcano, and the Parliamentarians chortled with delight.

From nowhere in particular appeared a person named Titus Oates, a bandy-legged little beast possessed of an unsavory past, a colossal nerve, and a genius for falsehood. He told

the nation generally that he had learned about a plot to kill the King—a Catholic plot, of course. The nation, inexplicably, believed him. The delighted Parliamentarians rushed to Oates with gold, and Oates retold his tale with embellishments. He was, for the hour, the lion of London, the center of a seething mass of excitement. He was asked out to dinner, was called before thrillingly impressive committees, was made much of wherever he went, and was getting rich rapidly.

But why should he have a monopoly upon the lying? Suddenly a large number of other men remembered that they, too, had heard about this terrible plot engineered from the Vatican, and they offered *their* stories, each more fantastic than the last. Some were such obvious fabrications that even a temporarily insane populace refused to believe them. But others were accredited, echoed—and rewarded. Sensible persons sniffed; but there were not many sensible persons left on the island of Britain. The men who should have put a stop to all this, who should have conducted an impartial investigation into the stories told by Oates and his imitators and shown these stories to be malicious inventions—these men were the same who wanted above all things to see the populace inflamed against the Roman Catholic Church. Instead of trying to quell the agitation, they deliberately encouraged Oates and his fellow falsifiers.

King Charles laughed at the lies and turmoil. He himself had questioned Oates and knew the man to be a monumental liar.

But the King did not laugh long. For this thing was getting serious. The story had assumed terrifying proportions; the Popish Plot now was not merely an attempt upon the

life of the monarch: it had become a well-planned, diabolically designed scheme for killing *all the Protestants in the kingdom!* There was to be a nation-wide St. Bartholomew's Eve—with this difference, that in Paris the Protestant population had been greatly outnumbered, whereas in England, at this time, the Protestants outnumbered the Catholics about seven or eight to one. Each Catholic, then, was to rise on the night appointed by the Pope and was to slaughter his seven or eight Protestant neighbors while they slumbered unsuspectingly. After that James was to be proclaimed King; England and Scotland (and presumably Ireland too) were to be annexed to France; and the Pope was to move into Whitehall.

King Charles, laughing no longer, sprang to the defense of his wife. He refused to have her dragged before any investigating committee named by a hostile Parliament. He refused to have her molested in any way.

But he was not able to defend every one so well. There was no stopping a public that had become one maniac. Man after man, implicated in the supposed plot, was sentenced to the gallows. Charles did not dare refuse to sign the death warrants, even though he knew that these men were not guilty, even though his own sympathies were with the Catholic Church and his own political interests opposed to those of the agitators.

Nor did Charles dare defend his own brother. It was better that the Duke should not be on hand as a target. The madness could not last; and when it was finished the people would feel ashamed of having made such fools of themselves. Meanwhile, however, let James be very quiet, and distant. Already there was a well-defined "exclusionist party" or-

ganized to bar him from the throne. The Stuart men were ever clannish, and Charles had no sympathy with exclusionists; but he could fight them better, he knew, in the absence of the object of their attack.

James went, then, to Holland. With him went his Duchess, the aged Earl of Peterborough, Colonel and Mrs. Churchill, and a few others. James's two daughters, Anne and the baby Isabella, he was forced to leave behind: Parliament feared he would try to bring them up in the Roman Catholic religion. James never did attempt to change the religion of Anne or Mary or Isabella. The Protestants in his little exiled court were permitted their own chapel for worship, and there is no record that James ever tried to convert them or ever discriminated against them because of their beliefs. Churchill, for example, who remained a good Anglican, and his wife, a so-called Broad Churchite (liberal enough to be suspected of free-thinking), were both in James's good graces. Feversham, Peterborough, the Earl of Bath, and others, all good Protestants, were nevertheless taken into the confidence of the Duke.

The exiles went first to The Hague, where William of Orange received them with celebrations and ceremonies galore, and Mary greeted them with tears of delight. They remained in The Hague only a short time, and then moved to Brussels.

Suddenly the Churchill skies had become overcast. There was no credit, or glory, or money, to be gained by service to an exile. Nor was there, apparently, much reason for hoping that the Duke would ever cease to be an exile. The exclusionists had the upper hand and meant to keep it.

The creature of these exclusionists was the Duke of Mon-

mouth, eldest son of King Charles. His mother had been Lucy Walters, a hot-blooded and very lovely little prostitute with whom the Merry Monarch had played on the Continent before the Restoration. Monmouth, whom we have already seen as a companion of Churchill at the siege of Maestricht, was a good-looking young man, tall, well built, well mannered. When Duke James was in Brussels, Monmouth was commander-in-chief of all the military forces in England. Brought up a Catholic, he had been converted to the Anglican Church, probably because it suited his ambitions; and now he was posing loudly as *the* Protestant champion. He toured England like a reigning monarch, trading unconscionably on his popularity, slapping backs, shaking hands, kissing babies. All this, James, moping miserably in Holland, could not do, and would not have done if he could. James himself was not optimistic. He knew that if Charles died suddenly the politicians would hoist Monmouth onto the throne and keep him there, barring James forever from the country.

Now Monmouth had no real claim to the throne. But the exclusionists, finding him a useful tool, pretended to believe that he was legitimate. They concocted a flabby tale saying that Charles, before the Restoration, had been secretly married to Lucy Walters. Thus they made him out a bigamist, for Lucy Walters was still alive when Charles was married to Catharine of Braganza, though she was dead when James was exiled. Nobody who knew the King believed this tale; for under no circumstances conceivable would Charles have married a commoner who was also a harlot. Such an act would have been contrary to his every instinct and all his training. Yet such credence did the story gain among those

who wanted to believe it that Charles was obliged on several occasions to deny it officially; and even then it persisted, wandering down city streets and country lanes like a bad odor—the odor of something which had long since died. There were no proofs that such a marriage had ever occurred; Lucy Walters was not there to tell her story; and although there was much whispering about a certain "little black box" in which the records of the marriage were supposed to have been concealed, there was never a vestige of evidence that such a box existed.

Indeed, there were some who did not even believe that Charles was Monmouth's father. They attributed this dubious honor to Henry Sidney, one of the better known adulterers of his day. But the Duke's distinctively Stuart features, and cynical Charles's own certainty, disprove this theory.

Still, Monmouth was there and James wasn't. And Monmouth, if he were once formally proclaimed king, would be difficult to dislodge. He had that *touch* which James lacked. James, even when he did the right thing, was a bore. Monmouth charmed irresistibly while he was doing the wrong thing. James was cold, dignified. Monmouth was young and gay and gracious. The future looked black for James; and also for Jack Churchill, whose fortunes were bound up with those of his master.

James did everything possible to keep in touch with his brother's court, and Churchill, his favorite go-between, was frequently sent on confidential missions to Paris or London, where he could always have private audience with Louis the Fourteenth or Charles the Second. The little court at Brussels grew as month after month slid past. It became a sort of headquarters for the Catholic party and exiled Protestants.

But it was at all times orderly, never an incubator of plots, never a hotbed of conspirators. Princess Anne was permitted to visit there, and the family, reunited, was amiable. The Duchess and Anne and Sarah Jennings Churchill spoke of Prince William as "the Orange," and of Mary, playfully, as "the Lemon." But the Duchess rarely played her little games any more, for she longed for her only living child, the baby Isabella, who was being kept in England in order that she might not be exposed to the pernicious influence of the Roman Catholic Church.

In England, the Shaftesbury followers—remnants of the old Commonwealth party who wanted no king at all, and the rich nobles who wanted a softer king than James would be—were pushing through Parliament the Exclusion Bill specifically barring James from the succession. That bill passed its first reading, passed its second reading. Then King Charles, who had waited as long as he dared, prorogued Parliament. "Whoever advised the King to do that will pay for it with their heads," Shaftesbury snarled.

One day there came a secret message to James. His brother was dying.

CHAPTER SIX

At Last It Happened

THERE was no time to be lost. Monmouth already was in London; only physical presence, and perhaps not even that, could save the throne for James.

The trip must be made at his own risk. He was not officially summoned; Charles, in fact, was not supposed to know anything about the message.

The Duke donned a black periwig and severely simple clothes, mounted a horse, and reached Armentières the first night and Calais the second. With him were Peterborough, Colonel Legge, Colonel Churchill, a barber, and two unliveried footmen. At Calais Churchill posed as the head of the party; he was disguised as a French officer, and the others behaved deferentially toward him.

Unfavorable winds delayed the sailing a short time, but they were in Dover the second day after. There the postmaster recognized the Duke, but said nothing. James and Colonel Churchill, the youngest and most vigorous men of the party, rode ahead, pushing their horses to a killing pace. They arrived in London about seven o'clock the next morning. King Charles, habitually an early riser, was being shaved; the illness had abated.

James fell to one knee and begged his brother's forgiveness for appearing without permission. This was done loudly, for the benefit of gossip-carrying attendants. Only his in-

tense anxiety for the King's health, James said, had caused him to come, and he was ready to return to exile the moment the King commanded.

Charles thanked him for his interest in the royal health, and permitted him to linger in London for a short time; but the situation was too dangerous, James's enemies too strong, for Charles to terminate the exile. The Duke pleaded to be permitted at least to stay in one of the three kingdoms, suggesting Scotland. England and Scotland were still separate kingdoms, and the English Parliament, where the opposition to James was concentrated, had no jurisdiction over Scotland, where, legally at least, James would be as much out of the reach of his enemies as he would be if he were back in the Low Countries. But so powerful had the Shaftesbury-Russell faction become that it was thought prudent to send up wind papers before making the Scottish exile official. Consequently, on October 7 of this year (1679) the following notice appeared in the public prints: "His Royal Highness, having represented to His Majesty, that he conceives it, for many respects, more proper for him to be in His Majesty's Dominions, rather than those of another Prince, and made it his humble Request to His Majesty, to have his Leave to go into Scotland, His Majesty has granted it: And it is presumed his Royal Highness will, in a short time, repair thither."

The presumption was correct. The wind papers reporting no gale, James was ordered to Scotland.

At the same time, James won a greater victory in the exile of Monmouth—to Holland. Monmouth had played too high-handed, too obvious a game. He had presumed once too often upon the celebrated good-nature of his father. Charles, amiable to a fault, could be persuaded to grant

almost anything, or at least to compromise; but on the subject of the divine right of kings, as he and his brother conceived it, he was, like all the other Stuarts, inflexible. It was a religion with them, not merely a theory. Had Charles been the selfish monster that moralistic historians have painted, he could easily have told himself that it made no difference to him *who* sat next upon the throne, since by then he himself would be dead. But again and again Charles took breathless risks for the sake of his brother's succession. If he sent James away, it was for James's own good; and when James was not present to fight his own battles, brother Charles fought them in his behalf.

So Monmouth went to The Hague; and James, a shuttlecock tossed by the battledores of the court, went back to Brussels—accompanied, of course, by the faithful Jack Churchill—to fetch his family. He gathered up his impedimenta, bade a tearful farewell to William and Mary, and sailed for a third exile.

The royal party passed through the English capital. The Duchess was not well: she was vomiting blood, and James pleaded to be permitted to keep her in London for a short time. But Charles was genuinely worried now about his own grip on the scepter, and Marie-Beatrice, ill though she was, was hurried north by post, the Duke with her. It was a terrible trip, in springless carriages over abominable roads; it took more than a month, for the party was forced to go slowly because of the condition of the Duchess.

Not being royal, Sarah Jennings Churchill, who was heavy with her first child at this time, was not obliged to endure these hardships. She remained in London. But Jack Churchill accompanied his master, for in such a crisis he was

too valuable a man to be spared for even a few weeks. He wrote frequently from Scotland, expressing the greatest concern for Sarah's health. It must have been a terrible ordeal, for he was honestly in love with his wife—more in love with her than ever before.

She was delivered of the child, a son, which died in infancy. Afterward she joined her husband at Edinburgh.

In the Scottish capital James was well liked. The Scots were ordinarily just as bigoted as the English, perhaps a bit more so. But at this time they did not have a political clique to keep the religious issue constantly before them, to exaggerate every story calculated to place Catholics in a bad light, to distort and discolor every episode which might make the Catholic Church or any of its votaries appear decent and human. Consequently they took James more or less for what they found him to be worth; and although he never became a public idol, he was liked and respected.

He lived in the palace of his ancestors, Holyrood. Stuarts had lived there for hundreds of years. It was there that James the Fifth had brought his bride, plump Margaret Tudor, and with her consummated the marriage that was the foundation of the family claim to the English and Irish crowns. Sentimentally we can wish that the Stuarts had never quit Holyroodhouse for the more comfortable, more garish, but much more dangerous palaces of England.

It was a bleak existence for the exiles. James himself, who worked all the time, and who rarely entered into the frivolities of court life, probably did not mind it; but his Duchess and the attendants of both of them, including the Churchills, found it very tiresome. There were no theatres, and of course no opera, in Scotland. Masked balls, garden fêtes, exhibitions

of fireworks, all the playfulness of the London court, were missing. Holyrood itself is a beautiful building, in its grim, romantic fashion. But it had not been occupied since the time of Cromwell, when the Roundheads stationed there had stripped it of most of its furniture. Then, too, the exile started at the worst season of the year in Scotland—December. The surrounding countryside was richly colored, rolling, inspiriting, but it was very different from the warm hedgerowed English fields to which these exiles were accustomed.

Churchill was not always made subject to these inconveniences, for his master continued to employ him as a confidential messenger and through him was in constant touch with brother Charles. It is not too much to assume that during this time Churchill frequently held secrets which if divulged to the proper parties in London (who would be glad to pay well for them) would have ruined James politically forever. We may as well credit our subject, while we have the chance, for his fidelity: it was a virtue for which he was none too conspicuous in later life.

At this time the conduct of Jack Churchill was admirable. Expert in diplomacy, he was no dabbler in politics, around which he carefully steered. Before he had left for Edinburgh he was offered a seat in Parliament. There is reason to believe that this was bait calculated to tempt him away from the service of James. But he refused, electing instead to take exile in dreary (as it must have been to him) Scotland.

Things brightened soon afterward, when Charles ordered his brother back to London. Parliament was not in session, the opposition was quiet for the hour, and it seemed safe for James to return. Charles wanted to settle a pension on his

current Pompadour, that stunning French woman whom he had created Duchess of Portsmouth (Charles made most of his women duchesses, and all of his sons dukes), and in order to place this pension outside the interference of Parliament he desired to charge it to the Post Office revenues, which by law were settled on James for life. James with Churchill and a large party journeyed to London, leaving the women in Scotland. When the necessary arrangements had been made, the party returned by sea to fetch the rest of the household from Edinburgh.

There were some 300 of them, all in the frigate *Gloucester*. Five other craft, in one of which was Sam Pepys, went as escort.

The weather was dirty. Early on a Saturday morning the *Gloucester* grounded near the mouth of the Humber. She bumped back and forth violently and sprang seven leaks. The rudder was smashed, killing a sailor. In the darkness, beyond the help of the escorting craft, she began to fill with water.

The stories of those aboard conflict at almost all points, but all agree that there was great confusion aboard the *Gloucester* that night. Shipwrecks were much the same then as now, and the man was rare who thought of anybody but himself. Notable exceptions were Colonel Legge and Colonel Churchill, whose first consideration was for their master. By the time James was awakened (he was a seasoned sailor and could sleep in any weather), there were seven feet of water in the ship and she was sinking fast. The two colonels brought a long boat around to a port of the Duke's cabin, and so low was the *Gloucester* at the time that James climbed out of the port directly into the boat.

Dozens of other men would have piled into the long boat also, but Jack Churchill drew his sword. The Duke should name those he wanted to take, and only the ones the Duke named would be permitted to pass. For the others, the sword. It was no time to stand on ceremony. The last to get in, at the Duke's own request as the boat was about to push off, was Churchill himself.

All those in the long boat were safely picked up by the yacht *Mary*. Others, too, were saved. But 130 men were drowned.

Afterward there was the customary hue and cry, with everybody telling a different story. The Duke was alternately praised and blamed, depending on the speaker. Some said he displayed great courage and did everything possible to save the lives of those in his party. Others said he showed great cowardice, commanding the long boat to be pushed off before it was half filled. The religious issue was not forgotten: the story was freely circulated that James had been at great pains to save the lives of his priests but had ignored all the others. The truth of the matter is something we will never know; research cannot reveal it: for it sank with the *Gloucester*. The captain was tried and honorably acquitted; the pilot was found guilty of criminal incompetence and sent to jail.

Meanwhile, James and his party proceeded, landing at Leith, the port of Edinburgh, the following evening. In spite of the disaster, the return to London with the Duchess and other ladies was made by sea, that mode of travel being faster, and infinitely more comfortable, than travel by land.

For a time the Churchill prospects were bright again. The Duke was installed once more in St. James's palace, where he held court regularly. The household was tolerably

happy in familiar surroundings. There was plotting, but no sign of it on the surface. Sarah Jennings, as beautiful and as acrimonious as ever, presented her husband with another child. Colonel Jack went here and there on secret missions; and in his spare time he played tennis with the King, Lord Godolphin, and Lord Feversham, all four crack players. Princess Anne sat at cards night and day, and took Sarah into her confidence about everything.

Princess Anne was developing into real womanhood, and it was time she was married. She was all aflutter. In December of 1680 a tall, pudgy German had come to court: he was George, son of the Duke of Hanover and a good Protestant. It was known everywhere that he was thinking of courting Anne. But George, notable for his common sense, failed to make proposals. He behaved admirably; but roly-poly Anne was naturally disappointed, for the assumption (probably correct) was that she had been found wanting. In tears, she told all this to Sarah.

A few years later, however (about the time the Duke of York and his household were returning from Scotland), Anne unexpectedly became the beloved of a very romantic person—in fact, a poet. Lord Mulgrave came of a good family and was not without personal charm; he wrote numerous elegant verses; and since he was not politically ambitious, or the creature of any cabal, it is reasonable to suppose that he really was, as he said and wrote, in love with the Princess. Anne was excited again; she told Sarah all about it; she couldn't talk of anything else.

But King Charles intervened; My Lord Mulgrave was dispatched to the Continent, his elegant verses with him; and

Anne retired from the drawing-room to weep on Mrs. Churchill's shoulder.

The incident served to warn the King that his younger niece was waxing overromantic; and since the German did not seem to want her, the royal ambassadors were called upon to make suggestions. Prince George of Denmark was the choice. He was a Protestant of course, a small, pot-bellied, stupid, good-natured man, a chronic sufferer from asthma, a collector of medals and coins. He liked to drink, but even wine could not lend him wit. "I've tried him drunk and I've tried him sober, and there's no good in him," said King Charles. He was not popular; neither was he unpopular. In fact, nobody paid much attention to him—except Anne, who made him a devoted wife.

Although this marriage had no great political or historical significance, as royal marriages go, it precipitated an important change in the career of Colonel and Mrs. Jack Churchill.

There is reason to believe that at about this time the Churchills were thinking of retiring from court and taking residence in the country. They had a little money—not much, but enough to support them in tolerable comfort. Churchill was perfectly fitted to lead the life of a country gentleman, for he was quiet, affable, passionately fond of his wife, and fond, too, of dogs and horses; and then, he had been a country boy in the first place.

But when Anne was married to George of Denmark, the situation was changed, and the Churchills were given an opportunity too good to be rejected.

The Duke of York was a doting father who rarely refused his children anything. He had promised Anne that

she should have her own household and her own servants after her marriage. He allowed her £30,000 a year and gave her the Cockpit, a mansion in London, and in addition he paid all her debts without a word of reproach. Anne had already offered Sarah Jennings Churchill a position as lady of the bedchamber. For this she would be given only £200 a year, but there was an understanding that Sarah would soon be elevated to the chief ladyship of the bedchamber—which would mean £400 a year. In addition, Sarah would have, and indeed already did have, vast influence over Princess Anne.

Some thirteen years earlier, Prince George of Denmark had visited England, and on his return had taken with him as page another of Sir Winston's enterprising sons, George, who was now a trusted gentleman of the bedchamber in the Danish Prince's household. Jack Churchill, too, was well thought of by the Prince. It was Churchill who was sent as head of the welcoming party which escorted Prince George from Denmark to England for the marriage; and his ingratiating manner, his suave charm, had captivated the bridegroom.

So that the Churchill family would inevitably have supreme influence in the household of Anne and her escort. Nothing could be done without their knowledge and permission. And the political importance of Princess Anne increased month by month as the Duchess of York failed to present her husband with a son.

Chiefly because of these circumstances, then, the Churchills decided to remain at court. England lost another country gentleman, and retained an accomplished soldier. Colonel Jack continued to bow from the hips, say the polite

thing, and play tennis with Charles the Second; Sarah continued to wind Anne around her finger; and old Sir Winston purred with pride.

But Sir Winston purred too soon. Once again the muttering of the exclusionists threatened to swell to a roar; Charles felt the throne rocking dangerously; and poor James was instructed to return to Scotland. Originally their home, Scotland had become for the Stuarts a convenient backyard —a barbed-wire fence behind which to jump in times of danger.

Back went James and all his family and attendants. This time, however, he went with considerable dignity—as Royal Commissioner, the King's personal representative in Scotland. Charles dispatched instructions to remodel and refurnish Holyrood in order to make it a worthy residence for a descendant of The Bruce. The Duchess bade her Isabella (whom she was never to see again, for the child died soon after) a tearful farewell. And off they went, and of course the Churchills went with them.

They were not long in Scotland. Thanks to Charles's adroit handling of the situation, the exclusionists were routed again, and again James was invited to return. Charles announced that invitation to his Privy Council, and Shaftesbury, Cavendish, Powle, Russell, and Capel promptly offered their resignations in protest. If they expected the King to burst into tears, they were mistaken. Charles only smiled, and said, "I accept with all my heart."

It seemed now as though the much-buffeted James at last had come to rest. The courtiers, excellent weather vanes, crowded around him in St. James's with as many flattering

remarks as they made when crowding around Charles at Whitehall.

Sarah's sister, widowed when her husband was killed on a French battlefield, had remarried. Her second husband, Richard Talbot, affectionately called "Lying Dick," was a Catholic, in the good graces of James, and very ambitious. He brought Frances Jennings back from the Continent, and for a time the two sisters were frequently together; Frances appears to have been one of the few women whose company Sarah could endure.

James at last got Churchill a title, persuading his brother to create him Baron of Aymouth in the Scottish peerage; so that in Scotland at least (though they probably hoped they would never have to go there again) Jack was "My Lord" and Sarah "My Lady."

Sarah wanted more than that. While Jack played tennis, and Anne played cards, and the King indulged in other sports with the ravishing Duchess of Portsmouth, Sarah was playing a game, too. As she had expected, she was soon promoted Chief Lady of the Bedchamber. She was ruler of Princess Anne's household, dictating everything there, tolerating no contradiction. Whenever Sarah spoke, Anne said yes. The Princess fondly believed that this was one of the great friendships of history: she believed that she and Sarah could be, would be, indeed already were, perfect companions: she believed that at last she had found a person who would give her no false words because of her birth and position. And, as a fact, the termagant Jack Churchill had married was no respecter of high titles. She scolded Anne unmercifully. But the masochistic Princess, blinking, asked only that Sarah would never leave her. If Sarah talked to

her that way, Anne reasoned, then Sarah certainly loved her. Anne was flattered because Sarah (that brilliant lady!) acknowledged the friendship, and it seems never to have occurred to her that Sarah might be playing politics.

The briefest separation became painful to Anne. They must correspond, even though they saw each other at least once a day. And the correspondence must be informal; dear Sarah must not feel obliged to write "Your Highness." Princess Anne, beaming with delight in her originality, suggested that they call one another, in their letters, Mrs. Freeman and Mrs. Morley. She didn't know why she had thought of those two names: they had just come to her. Didn't Sarah think it a delightful idea? Perhaps Sarah did, or perhaps she didn't. But she fell in with the notion, and a celebrated correspondence was begun. "My dear, *dear* Mrs. Freeman" —this was Sarah—was informed of a million trivial things by letter every day; and crisp, occasionally sarcastic epistles, were written less regularly to Mrs. Morley. Anne was elated. Sometimes (though not often) her letters contained interesting information of which Sarah and her handsome husband made full use.

It was thus that matters stood when at last it happened—the dreaded, the inevitable.

On a Sunday night Whitehall was characteristically gay. The King sat fondling three lovely Duchesses (one of them Barbara Palmer); some high ministers of state were having their wine served at a gaming table, and about £2,000 was heaped in front of them; a quaint little boy with curls was warbling hymns, presumably in honor of the Sabbath, when Charles complained that he was not feeling well.

The following day the King continued to feel not quite

well. And abruptly his face became dark, and he fell in a faint on the floor. One of the royal surgeons was called and took his life in his hands (for it was against the law to do this except with official permission) when he bled the King on the spot, using a borrowed pocket-knife.

Charles was carried to his bed. Alarm was sounded far and wide. Queen Catharine came hurrying in. James was notified, and appeared immediately, with Jack Churchill at his heels. The Duchess of Portsmouth retired to her sumptuous apartments, there to weep for many hours for the man she (to do her justice) really loved. All over the city nobles were climbing into sedan chairs and hurrying toward the palace.

What was the matter with the King? Nobody seemed to know. Fourteen physicians muttered mysteriously among themselves. "Apoplectic," said some. "No, epileptic," said others. One thought it was a fever. To be certain, they treated him for everything. He was bled white; hot irons were held to his head; he was made to swallow doses of a frightful bark concoction. The poor fellow was patient, pleasant, even entertaining—a wit to the end.[1]

The Queen, exhausted, was carried to her own bedchamber to rest. She sent a message of regret that she was not present, begging her husband to pardon her. Charles cried: "*She* ask *my* pardon, poor woman! I ask *hers* with all my heart!"

He summoned before him his various sons—the dukes

[1] Doubtless he was not made to feel any better by the odor in the bedchamber. King Charles was very fond of dogs and always kept at least a few spaniels near at hand. He permitted these animals to breed and suckle their young in his bedchamber—their natural functions delighted him always—"which rendered it very offensive," writes Evelyn, "and which indeed made the whole court nasty and stinky."

of Grafton, Southampton, Richmond, St. Albans, and Northumberland, representing almost as many mothers. He blessed them affectionately, admonishing them to lead good lives. One was missing—Monmouth. The King did not mention his name.

Charles conferred lengthily with his brother. He requested James to care for the various royal mistresses, not even forgetting Eleanor Gwyn—"and don't let Nelly starve."

James was a very busy man. So, too, was Lord Churchill. It was necessary to sound out the sentiment of the court, to measure the strength of the exclusionists. Had they any prepared plans to prevent James's accession? There were whisperings, callings-aside, many little hushed conferences, but James's friends were finally able to report to him that no dangerous opposition to the legitimate succession was apparent.

Thursday night, it was thought, would be the King's last. The fourteen physicians had only augmented his pain, and he weakened every hour. Presumably in order to give him strength, the physicians took *fourteen more ounces of blood* from him! Still he smiled, uttering witticisms.

Yet there was one matter about which he did not jest—not even Charles. James leaned over the pale figure in the bed, so close that nobody else in the room could hear his whisper. He seemed to be putting a question. Charles nodded soberly. "With all my heart." James, in the King's name, cleared the room, permitting only two trusted henchmen to remain. Jack Churchill was not one of them.

The nobles and ministers of England—the bishops, dukes, secretaries, generals—retired to anterooms and corridors,

murmuring in amazement. What was this? Why this extraordinary behavior when a monarch was about to die?

Leading to the royal bedchamber was a secret stairway, built for lovely women. Up this stairway came a man muffled in a very long cloak, his shaven pate covered with a large wig. He was the Benedictine monk, John Huddlestone, who had saved Charles's life after the battle of Worcester. The disguise was needed, for he was about to commit a capital offense.

James led him to the bedside.

"Once this good man saved your life. He comes now to save your soul."

Charles whispered, "He is welcome."

What followed lasted about three-quarters of an hour, during which time official England, in the anteroom, held its breath, scarcely daring even to guess.

Charles was taken into the Holy Roman Church. John Huddlestone heard his confession, gave him absolution, and administered extreme unction. He asked whether the King cared to receive the Lord's Supper. "If you think I am worthy," said Charles. Charles choked when he tried to swallow the Host: it was necessary to open the anteroom door wide enough to have a glass of water passed inside—a procedure which must have increased the wonderment out there. Charles would have knelt for the ceremony of the Sacrament, but the monk restrained him, assuring him that prostration of the soul, not prostration of the body, was what God demanded.

Holding a crucifix before the dying man, the monk admonished him to remember his Redeemer in his last thought.

Then he resumed wig and cloak, and was quietly conducted down the secret staircase.

Official England was readmitted to the bedchamber. The great ministers and nobles, some thirty in number, filed nervously in, took their places, and waited. They were very quiet, glancing sometimes at one another, sometimes at the still, white figure of the Merry Monarch. They waited and waited, rustling a bit, shifting from foot to foot. The night wore on; dawn oozed furtively through the long windows and between the curtains.

The King opened his eyes, smiled, apologized.

"I'm sorry to take such an unconscionable while dying."

Later he remarked that it was time to wind the clock on the mantelpiece. Somebody wound it. Somebody else told the King that another day had come, and Charles begged to have the hangings drawn back from the windows in order to permit him one last look at the gardens. He had loved the gardens. He loved life, and hated to die. But he was always dignified, a Stuart. All consciousness passed from him about ten o'clock, and by noon life too had passed.

He was a gentleman and a great king, and has been sadly misunderstood by posterity.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Alarums and Excursions

THE King was dead; long live the King. He retired for fifteen minutes to his own apartments, seeing nobody. Presumably he was praying.

And at first it seemed that James would need any Divine assistance that prayer might bring him. He had all the Stuart stubbornness and unwillingness to share authority, and all the Stuart fondness for favorites, but he lacked the traditional Stuart charm. He was an incredibly stupid politician. Hilaire Belloc says accurately of James: "He did not look far ahead, and to either side not at all. He wore blinkers."

But James lacked something besides a sense of politics. He lacked (and this cannot be overemphasized) that certain *touch*—that appreciation of the dramatic, that practical humor or perhaps hypocritical affectation—which makes an individual gleam bright in public life, whatever may be his private faults or shortcomings. There is no word for it. But whatever it is, the actor, the athlete, most of all the politician, cannot succeed without it; and the more he has the greater will be his success. James had none at all.

There were murmurs about the meanness of Charles's funeral. The people expect some display on these occasions; but the Merry Monarch's corpse was hustled to Westminster at midnight without pomp or music, and there put away. This was necessary because of the Roman Catholic services; but the people could not know that.

James's coronation was a splendid affair, but many things went wrong. The crown was too big for the new king's head; the canopy was knocked down in some unexplained manner; one of his sons by Catherine Sedley died that same day. All these things were accepted as ill omens.

Yet in spite of all this, James started well; and for a time it seemed as though he were going to be not only acceptable to his people but even popular with them. When he emerged from his private chambers after that presumed prayer, he called a meeting of the Privy Council and delivered a speech. It was extemporaneous and it made a highly favorable impression. James promised that the Church of England would be respected in all its rights and privileges, and that the Council members need fear no upheaval or sudden departure from British tradition. At first he made few changes in the ministry. Even Halifax and others who had expected to be thrown out of office, were retained. The new king himself took charge of naval affairs, making Sam Pepys his first assistant. He spoke against lewdness and licentiousness, and declared that his reign would be one of hard work; he dismissed Catherine Sedley, assuring the ministers that he would not be ruled by any woman.

All this was excellent. But James went further, apparently meaning to reëstablish England as a nation to be respected throughout Europe. Firmly he informed the Prince of Orange that he would tolerate no plotting exiles at The Hague; and he demanded, and obtained, the dismissal of all Monmouth's most important supporters who had been holding office under the Prince. The messenger whom James dispatched to inform King Louis, officially, of the death of Charles, was instructed to mark just what ceremonies were

performed for his benefit, just what laudatory phrases were spoken to him as representative of James the Second; these phrases and ceremonies, and no others, were to be used when Louis officially acknowledged the message.

It was Jack Churchill who was assigned to take the news to King Louis. The errand was a matter of pure ceremony, for Louis of course knew, weeks before Churchill's arrival at Versailles, that King Charles had died. It is highly improbable that so clever a man as Churchill would be sent upon so meaningless a mission. It is more probable that, as was customary in these cases, his formal duty covered a secret one. As much was amply suspected at the time; and there were many stories flying the rounds. If we believe Macaulay (but it is better not to do so on this point) Churchill was asked to demand a large sum of money and to assure Louis that James would—let us say "coöperate" with France. It is certain that James demanded, and presumably got, the sum of £37,000 which Louis had owed to Charles by previous arrangement.

Anyway, much was made of that trip to France. It was buzzed about that the new king had verified all the previous understandings with France as opposed to Protestant Holland, though cloaking them under a great show of independence, and that King Louis had told a friend, "My good ally (meaning James) talks big, but he is as fond of my pistoles as ever his brother was." The Parliamentarians cried "I told you so" when, soon afterwards, and in spite of a treaty made with Charles, the French monarch grabbed Brabant and Hainault, James offering no objections.

Jack Churchill made an ideal go-between for James and Louis. He came of good family, yet he was not exalted enough

to attract attention to his movements. He could keep a secret. His appearance was good, his manners perfect; he was a finished diplomat. Moreover, he was poor, very ambitious, and married to an equally ambitious woman. He has been copiously slandered by Whig historians and their parrots; yet it seems to me that Wolseley goes too far in the other direction when he writes: "Although Churchill was admitted to James's political secrets, and had gained his confidence during many secret missions, he took no personal part in the intrigues and crooked politics of this time." Matters of this nature are not usually revealed to posterity except as rumors; but there was plenty of underhand work going on, and it is fair to assume that our subject was active in much of it.

By way of reward he was elevated to the English peerage as Baron Churchill of Sandridge. Now he had a seat in Parliament, with, of course, the tacit understanding that he support the Crown in its battle with the nobles. He was definitely in politics. Until this time he had avoided that life as much as possible, and there is reason to believe that he went into it with reluctance, for he was by nature a courtier, not a lawmaker; he was born with the brain of a general and the polish of a parlor dandy, but not with a penchant for Parliamentary plottings.

It is worth noting that although he was not without what the modern world calls personality, yet he never had a familiar manner: he could make friends with anybody, and was genial always, but he did not give or ask confidences. Excepting Lord Godolphin—a little country gentleman of good family, steady, dependable, but by no means dull—he had no close male friend. And excepting Sarah, he had no

KING CHARLES THE SECOND

From the original of Sir Peter Lely. Engraved by W. Finden

sweetheart. He seems never to have felt a need for support. His most conspicuous characteristic was a superb self-confidence. Although at this time he was a busy man, and was growing more busy every day, he retained the same placid air that had been remarked in him in the first days of the Duke of York's English household. He was a mild-mannered and gracious, but not condescending. He was a snob, but never disagreeable. Though he talked and wrote in a lofty strain, as though conscious that he had been born to be very great, he never became overpompous. He had a quiet, whimsical sense of humor, and impeccable manners.

Sarah he took into his confidence about everything. You might suppose that he would soften her or that she would harden him. But in this union the irresistible force seemed to have met the immovable body, and the result was a curious one. Sarah, day by day, week by week, grew increasingly sharp-tongued and hot-tempered; while her husband became kinder, quieter, more gentlemanly. His patience with his wife passed all understanding. He loved her, and knew she loved him; nothing she might do could anger him. Indeed, nothing *anybody* did seemed to infuriate this tall man; or if he was angry, he did not show it. Yet he was no prig. He was not one to turn the other cheek. Private grudges were beneath him; but on the field of war he met the enemy with naked sword and struck accurately and hard. There was a natural impressiveness in his manner: nobody who had seen him ever made the mistake of not taking him seriously.

Sarah used to shriek herself into fits of weeping at him, but he refused to become excited. The more furious because, it seemed, she realized her own childishness, she would shower recriminations upon this tranquil giant; but they rolled off

like drops of water upon a slanting sheet of zinc, leaving the surface shiny still. Then she would fall into his arms, sobbing, begging him to forgive her. He alone knew how to manage her when she was hysterical. She herself said, in later years when she was a widow, that he never gave her a harsh word or even a reproachful glance; he never scolded her, never attempted to reform her. Once, in a rage, she tried to break his calm by cutting off her hair in his presence. He loved that hair—soft, thick, light brown with golden flecks, very long—and she knew it. She cut it short, hurled a great batch of it upon the table in front of him, and flounced out of the room. When she returned, repentant, he was there and with his arms open for her. But the hair was gone. He never referred to the incident; but years afterwards, when he was dead, she found the hair, carefully folded, at the bottom of a chest to which he alone had kept the key. A queer pair they were, Jack and Sarah Churchill.

James's first flush of popularity soon died. Perhaps it would be more accurate to say that James himself killed it. A list of the usages to which he strained the royal dispensing power would be too lengthy and complicated for these pages. It is enough that the politicians, jealous of power and seeing adumbrations of tyranny in every move James made, had plenty of cause for complaint. Perhaps James was not going to prove such a good king after all. Opposition leaders kept the whispers rolling, and William of Orange watched with cold, scheming eyes.

James demanded toleration. He could see no reason why a Roman Catholic should not profess and practice his religion publicly. The second Sunday of his reign he shocked the nation by causing mass to be celebrated in his private chapel.

On Easter he staged a solemn high mass in Westminster—the first that edifice had housed for 127 years. Jesuits appeared in alarming numbers around the court; and for one of these, Father Petre (whom Haile calls a "weak would-be Woolsey"), James was trying to get a Cardinal's hat. The King was beginning to hedge on certain statements in that first promising speech. An unofficial nuncio was dispatched to the Vatican. Satellites who thought more of high rank than clear conscience were being converted to the Catholic faith in order to please the new sovereign, who, remember, was the legal head of the Church of England.

Henry the Eighth had changed England almost overnight from a Catholic to a Protestant nation. Apparently James thought to change it back as abruptly. But Henry had possessed a much firmer grip on his people and his nobles than James could claim, and he was not subjected to such bitter and numerous opposition. The Tudor, too, could dangle before the nobles tempting gifts of Church lands to be confiscated; but with James this situation was reversed, the nobles fearing to lose their holdings to the Church.

There is no doubt that James went too far. Or at least he moved too fast. He was not prejudiced against Protestants: it is reported that he remonstrated with King Louis for that monarch's treatment of them; and it is certain that the Huguenots, pouring into England after the Edict of Nantes was revoked, received as good harbor as William offered in the Low Countries, in spite of the fact that their tales of atrocities at home did much to inflame English anti-Catholic feeling.

No, all James demanded was tolerance. But there was the trouble: he *demanded* it. The English people were not to

be treated that way. King Louis warned him. Even the Pope, it is said, tried to slow this illustrious but overrash convert. James would not listen to advice. What was perfectly evident to other men was hidden from him by his own zeal for his Church.

There were plots against him from the beginning; and soon they began to explode, north and south, like firecrackers.

The Duke of Monmouth, prodded by his mistress and friends, was in Brussels fumbling with plans for an invasion of Great Britain. The ninth Earl of Argyle, Archie Campbell, in exile also, was doing the same. These two were to have embarked upon separate expeditions, Argyle to Scotland, Monmouth to England, and strike simultaneously. But their plans miscarried and Argyle went first.

It was a clumsy and weak blow. He sailed for Scotland with a few friends, gathered about him some 2,500 Highlanders, vacillated while valuable time slipped by, and finally went down to defeat at the hands of the King's men, his own punishment being the gallows. He died like the gentleman he was.

This petty revolution scarcely disturbed the court in London, and the government was comparatively lenient with those captured. My Lord Churchill was not called upon to display his talents.

But the Monmouth matter could not be treated so lightly. The Duke had impressive backing: the wealthy Harriet Wentworth, his mistress, supported him with spirit and gold; there were some tolerably good military men ready to go with him whenever he set out to invade England. Monmouth himself was an experienced general who had been

taught tactics by the great Turenne. For many years he had been posing obstreperously as the champion of the Protestants, a potential savior from the dreaded persecution of the Pope. This of course increased his popularity, especially in the western countries where a credulous peasantry esteemed Monmouth as something not altogether ungodlike.

Monmouth, to be sure, lacked the soul of a crusader. He was not made for the work his friends urged upon him. But those friends, some from excessive enthusiasm, others because they had sinister motives of their own, had instilled into him a belief in his own infallibility; and Monmouth, remembering the huzzas which had greeted him when he had trouped through the West, firmly believed that an infatuated populace would flock to his blue standard. So he set about preparing for an expedition.

The one man who could have stopped him, and should have stopped him before he started, was William of Orange. But William had his own eye on the English throne. William had also a clear knowledge of the situation, and he had political acumen combined with a convenient lack of conscience. Monmouth, William was reasonably certain, would fail; and that failure would clear the field of another contender for the crown. With Monmouth out of the way, the Parliamentarians who were secretly backing the Duke would be obliged to support William for lack of other contenders. All this the sour little Dutchman knew. He knew also that it was best for him to play a waiting game, and he was a good waiter.

Monmouth pawned his jewels and those of his mistress, and collected various small sums from English refugees who were in sympathy with his cause. He bought four field guns,

1,500 swords, some pikes and muskets, 1,500 breastplates (of all things!), a small number of pistols and carabines, and 200 barrels of gunpowder. He then chartered three ships and sailed for England.

Early on the morning of June 13, 1685, Sir Winston Churchill was awakened in his London home by two burgesses from Lyme Regis, a south coast hamlet which he represented in Parliament. They had ridden night and day to bring him the news that the Duke of Monmouth had landed at this hamlet with about 300 armed men, besides powder, pistols, carabines, swords, and breastplates; that he had taken possession of the place; that he had issued a proclamation denouncing King James as the murderer of King Charles, an usurper, a traitor, and a tyrant, and modestly admitting himself to be the one man England needed, in addition to being the legitimate claimant of the crown; and finally that he had called for volunteers and was recruiting many.

Sir Winston awakened his oldest son, Jack, who was always cool-headed about these things, and the four of them went to Whitehall and got the King out of bed.

James acted promptly. So did Parliament. A bill of attainder against Monmouth was passed, the King was granted £400,000 with which to put down the rebellion, and a reward of £5,000 was offered for Monmouth dead or alive. The militia was called out, all commissioned officers were ordered to join their regiments, the three Scottish and three English regiments in the Dutch service were recalled, the Irish Guards were ordered over to England, and numerous residents of London who were known to be friendly to Monmouth were imprisoned for safekeeping.

Jack Churchill was made a brigadier and soon afterwards

a major general. He was put in command of the first regular troops collected, and sent out after the rebels.

There he was in familiar country. This low and pleasant land, cut by streams and by hedgerows, and filled with sleepy cattle and noisy birds, he knew of old. In Chard, where he made his first headquarters, he was only about eighteen miles from his own birthplace, Ash House. But he was all the soldier now, with no time, if he had the desire, for sentimentalizing. He located the enemy near Taunton, where they were daily increasing. He kept after them, worrying them, while he waited for reënforcements. He did not dare try to force Monmouth into battle yet. Instead he harassed outparties, kept in touch with informers, and cut off numerous bodies of countrymen bent upon joining the bastard Duke. For Monmouth's cause was well supported in this part of England, and raw-boned farmers were coming from all directions to fight under the Protestant Champion. Churchill could not count upon the local militia: most of its members, either actively or otherwise, favored the Duke. Moreover, the peasants were hostile to James's troops, making transportation and all secret movements very difficult.

Nevertheless, left to himself Jack Churchill would have cleaned up this business in short time. At thirty-five, with his first real chance for distinction, he was a good soldier, eager for advancement, superbly self-confident, but at no time careless. Monmouth, moving north hesitantly, was gaining recruits but was not able to arm them effectively. He was rallying not gentlemen, or any moneyed persons, but only commoners; and he seems suddenly to have been stricken with a great uncertainty.

On the other hand, Churchill, as always in the field, knew

exactly what he wanted to do and exactly the best way of doing it. In addition, Churchill knew his own men; he knew the countryside; and he knew the Duke, with whom he had fought side by side in France, and whose life he had once saved.

It was Jack Churchill's chance to achieve distinction and wealth—the chance for which he had been waiting. He set about his task with a high heart.

Then came from London, bearing James's commission to command, Lord Feversham, a French Huguenot. Feversham, born Louis Duras, was twelve years older than Churchill—a good-looking, dark-complexioned man, affable, well-intentioned, but more fond of eating and drinking and dressing than he was of military exercises. He was a nephew of the great Turenne, but unlike his uncle he was a staunch Protestant and a poor soldier. He had fled to England to escape religious persecution, had become a naturalized Englishman, and had been created by James Earl of Feversham. James trusted him implicitly: he had been one of the two persons, both Protestants (the Earl of Bath was the other) who had witnessed the death-bed conversion of King Charles.

This appointment came as a shock to the superseded Churchill, now second in command, who with accurate foresight wrote to the Earl of Clarendon, ". . . for I see plainly that the troble is mine, and that the honour will be another's."

Once more wealth and family connections had pushed aside mere ability. Yet Churchill was obedient; he played the game; and he was eager to salvage whatever opportunity for advancement was left him. In this same letter to Clarendon he wrote: ". . . nobody living can have bene more ob-

sarvant than I have bene to my Lord feaversham, ever since I have bene with him, in soe much that he did tell me that he would writt to the King, to lett him know how diligent I was," and he asks Clarendon whether Feversham "has done me that Justice."

From this time the conduct of the King's men was quite different. No longer was Monmouth anticipated in every move he made, and vigorously harassed at all times. Feversham got his reënforcements; his troops were concentrated and he should have maneuvered to force the enemy to battle. Every day that passed without action strengthened Monmouth's hand. Prompt and vigorous action would corner the Duke and oblige him to fight before his forces were adequately armed and trained; but Feversham dallied, marching and countermarching with no set plan.

Churchill, always watchful, learned that Monmouth was bending every effort to get horses and saddles, and from this he conjectured that the Duke planned to make a break for some other county, leaving his foot entrenched at Bridgewater. This was indeed, what Monmouth had in mind, but he lacked the confidence to give the command. He was panicky. For the first time in his life he was faced with the choice of making a decision and acting on it promptly, or losing his life. There were no obsequious exiles to whisper flattery in his ears; there were no clever Frenchmen to steer him on the right course because he was a king's favorite. He had to make up his own mind, and he wasn't accustomed to that. Vacillating, he missed many opportunities to take the offensive with effect. This was not an ordinary war and should not have been so treated by either commander. Monmouth's one chance lay in a bold stroke: any victory for the rebels, how-

ever petty from a technical military standpoint, would do wonders toward depressing the royal troops and winning over wavering peasants, and it would vastly enhearten the rebels already in arms. Monmouth knew that. What he did not know was how to make up his mind to try a bold stroke.

The rebellion might yet be successful. The militia were not to be relied upon. The standing army was not large, and practically all of it was concentrated under Feversham, with only a small guard left in London; some time would be required to fetch the Irish Guards and bring over the six regiments of regulars from Holland. If Monmouth were permitted to raise his standard elsewhere in the kingdom, attracting another large body of recruits by his personal appearance and starting a second revolt, it would be difficult to protect the capital. Just how numerous and how strong the Duke's London supporters were, nobody seemed to know, not even the Duke himself; but they might prove to be very numerous and very strong indeed if Monmouth came rapping at the city gates.

After twelve days of shilly-shallying in the rain, the two armies found themselves facing one another at a distance of less than four miles. Not through any design on Feversham's part, not through any purposeful maneuvering, but almost by accident, Monmouth was being forced either to give battle or to retreat. Thoroughly disheartened, he decided upon retreat; he would feint with his infantry in order to give the impression that he was falling back on Taunton, and then he would put through his original plan of dashing for Gloucester. This he was preparing to do when a person we know only as Farmer Godfrey came upon the scene.

Farmer Godfrey, who lived near the royal camp, and who

himself was an enthusiastic Monmouth supporter, had an interesting tale. The soldiers of the King, he reported, were mostly drunk. So certain were they that Monmouth would not dare attack them (Farmer Godfrey said) that the very sentinels were sleeping, and no entrenchments had been thrown up.

Here, then, was Monmouth's great chance. He hesitated. But Godfrey persuaded him to look at the royalist camp, and the two of them ascended the tower of Bridgewater church, where Monmouth peered through a glass anxiously.

Dumbarton's Royal Scots . . . The Foot Guards . . . Kirke's Lambs . . . Churchill's Royal Dragoons. . . .

The Duke sighed. Below him were his excited farmers—hot-blooded enough, and willing, but hopelessly green. Pop-eyed fanatics harangued them, while newly commissioned officers armed them with rusty muskets, pitchforks, scythe blades mounted on hoe handles, and such. The precious breastplates had been left in Lyme Regis.

What chance would these men have against the Royal Scots, the Foot Guards, the King's own?

Monmouth, nodding toward the royalist camp, said, "I know those regiments. They'll fight."

Yet certainly things looked as Farmer Godfrey said things were. Feversham's infantry faced north, his artillery faced west, and there was a space of perhaps 150 yards between them. No entrenchments were in evidence. Apparently the Frenchman, certain that his position could not safely be attacked by day, had not given even a thought to the possibility of a night attack.

Monmouth was a fickle person; he suddenly brightened. He descended from the church tower in high spirits. He

slapped Lord Grey on the shoulder, assuring him that there would be no difficulty surprising the royal horse. "We shall have no more to do than lock up the stable doors and seize the troopers in their beds!" Entirely optimistic, he called a council of war, and it was agreed to attack that night.

CHAPTER EIGHT

Paths of Glory

IT was a Sunday. There were prayers and sermons, and the peasants moved out across the moor with the echoes of thrilling phrases in their ears. They had been exhorted to fight for the Lord God of Hosts and the Protestant cause. They had been told that this was the all important, the deciding conflict between Popery and the True Religion, between Tyranny and Freedom. They had been told many similar things, and believing, they were keen for the fray.

There were about 3,500 of them—a regiment of horse and five of foot.[1] The army they were to attack numbered about 3,000, exclusive of the militiamen, who, however, were well in the rear and were not expected to participate in the battle, being unskilled and for the most part favorable to the Duke's cause anyway.

There was a full moon when Monmouth's force started, but a rising mist offset this. The actual distance between the two armies was slightly over three miles, but the circuitous course Monmouth was obliged to take in order to avoid outposts and to attack at the agreed-upon point made his march about five and a half miles.

Strict orders for silence were issued. The countersign was "Monmouth and God with us." Any man who spoke above

[1] Exact figures do not exist. Monmouth's army was irregular, subject to sudden gusts of recruiting and frequent desertions. In addition, some of the men lost their way in the fog and never did get into the fight.

a whisper was to be stabbed by his neighbor without hesitation or fear of future punishment.

Farmer Godfrey led them well around Chedzoy, where it was known that a party of Royalists was stationed. Apparently he led them too far around the town, for although familiar with the region in the daytime, in the night and the mist, and under stress of the excitement, he lost his way.

They heard the clock in the church steeple at Chedzoy strike one. There was no other sound.

The land was cut with many ditches, or "rhines," of varying widths. Sometimes these ditches were almost dry; more often, and particularly after such rains as had fallen in the past few days, they were filled with water and were thick with mud on the bottom, being passable only by fords, or, as the natives called them, "steanings." They crossed the Black Ditch, the first of these, but Farmer Godfrey lost precious minutes locating a ford over the second, the Langmoor Rhine.

The mist crawled slowly about them, almost white in the futile glare of the moon. It was impossible to see more than a few yards ahead. The ground was low and muddy.

Monmouth ordered the cavalry to push ahead with Farmer Godfrey. The plan was for these 600 men to start the attack at the space between the artillery and infantry camps, dash through this gap into the village, set fire to the village, and then fall upon the enemy from the rear while the infantry was attacking from the front. It was calculated that the Royalists, in the confusion, the fog, and the flames, would be routed before they had formed to fight.

But no sooner had the horse started to move forward when they were discovered by a vedette of the Life Guards

(obviously *not* sleeping, despite Godfrey's tale), who fired his pistol and rode back for the camp as fast as he could ride.

"*The rebels! The rebels are on us!*"

There was no time to be lost. Monmouth ordered the cavalry ahead at a gallop and hastily formed the foot to follow.

In the camp of the King's men there was terrible confusion. Outposts came running in. Officers, not at all certain of what was happening, nevertheless yelled commands lustily. Men not half awake—many of them probably not half sober either—were turning out helter-skelter, fumbling for muskets, for saddles, for pistols and cartridge boxes.

Lord Grey, in command of the Duke's cavalry, missed the village. In front of him loomed the Brussex Rhine, widest and deepest of the three ditches which had originally separated the two camps. Seeking the ford he knew was close at hand, he turned to the right. The ford was on the left. He found himself, with his nervous followers, opposite musketmen, the lights of their matches gleaming evilly through the fog.[2] There was a moment of horrible silence. Then:

"Who are you for?"

"The King."

"*What* king?"

"Monmouth and God with us!" yelled some zealot.

"Take *this* with you then!"

[2] This was Dumbarton's regiment of Royal Scots, the oldest in the service. It was the only regiment in Feversham's camp still equipped with the matchlock, which was then being replaced by the snaphaunce or flintlock. Grey could not estimate the numbers opposite him by the gleam of these lighted matches, for it was a common ruse to set up bits of lighted wood and thus give an exaggerated appearance of strength. Wolseley suggests that Grey might have got off his course because he mistook these matches, in the fog, for the lights of the village to which he should have gone.

There was a command, a flash of musket fire. Some of the cavalrymen were suddenly without horses, and some of the horses were without riders. Horses and riders alike were inexperienced; they had never before been fired upon; they bolted.

Monmouth was just bringing up his infantry in front of the Brussex Rhine when the broken cavalry, not waiting for any further shots, went tearing past.

The infantry was thrown into confusion. Many of the stragglers, thinking the battle already lost, retreated promptly. The drivers of the baggage and ammunition wagons were swept into the panic and raced for home, abandoning everything.

The foot regiments, which formed the bulk of the army, remained. Monmouth realized that his original plan had been spoiled, but he brought up his infantry attack immediately, hoping still to take advantage of the confusion in the King's camp.

My Lord Feversham, who had gone to bed in the blissful belief that the rebels were retreating and that there would be plenty of time to chase them down the following day, now was trying to find his misplaced periwig so that he could sally forth from his tent and see to the command of his men. But Jack Churchill was up and active. It was Churchill who had placed himself at the head of the Royal Scots at the first alarm, and Churchill who had ordered the volley fired so effectively at Lord Grey's men.

The musket fire became general among the rebels now. Their aim was high, and their shots, fired wildly and at random, did little damage. Cooler heads advised them to hold their fire until they could see the enemy, but the farmers

were too excited to obey. They began to run short of powder and ball, and learned too late that there were no men to man the ammunition wagons.

The mist hung low over the moor, but the first pale glimmering of dawn was visible.

My Lord Feversham was adjusting his periwig in front of a tiny hand mirror. He was not yet quite prepared to sally forth. But Jack Churchill was wasting no time. The Royal Scots were suffering the brunt of the rebel attack, and in addition were being cut by cannonball from Monmouth's three fieldpieces. Churchill brought over Trelawney's men and Kirke's from the left. The Royalists needed field guns with which to answer this bombardment: the guns were there but they were not in position, and the horses intended for them were back in the village. My Lord Feversham, his toilet completed to his own satisfaction, came out of his tent to find that Churchill had commandeered the carriage horses of the Bishop of Winchester, who had accompanied Feversham as a sort of spiritual advisor. And soon there were cannon roaring on both sides of the ditch.

Churchill wanted to lead the men across the Brussex Rhine and fall upon the rebels before they had a chance to recover from their first fright. His policy was always to start the attack before the enemy had an opportunity to do so. This plan Feversham vetoed as overbold: no advance should be made, Feversham said, until there was light enough to distinguish friend from foe. Churchill did, however, lead a body of his own dragoons across the great ditch, and at the head of them he charged and captured the enemy cannon.

Dawn came fully at last, and the mist lifted. Monmouth was without doubt beaten, but the battle still raged.

Lord Grey, who had retreated with his cavalrymen in the panic, returned now to confer with Monmouth. The two of them, perceiving that the day was lost, decided to desert; and off they went, leaving the farmers to finish the fight as best they could.

The rest of the job was easy enough for a man like Churchill. Troopers crossed the ditch when the light was full, charged the disjointed and leaderless rebel forces, and drove them from the field.

After that the deluge. It was a deluge of blood. The King's men swarmed over the countryside cutting down whole corps of frightened farmers. At Feversham's orders more than twenty persons were hanged without pretense at trial, simply to intimidate the populace. With all this Churchill had little to do. At the first opportunity he wrote a dispatch to his King, informing him of the victory. A few days later he wrote to Sarah, assuring her that he awaited with impatience the expected command to return to the capital, and that he would not be happy until he was again in the arms of her "whom I love above my owne life." That command came the following day, and he returned promptly, unwounded and well.

The dirty work which necessarily follows an uprising of this nature fell to Colonel Percy Kirke, whose dragoons were called the Lambs—not in irony, but because they had fought in Tangier under the insignia of a lamb. Kirke was a soldier, and his orders were to strike terror to the inhabitants of the West. He did. Fantastic stories are told of his cruelty, but the majority of them are patently exaggerated or altogether false. There is no real evidence that Kirke stepped beyond the bounds set for him—if, indeed, he stepped as far

as those bounds. He and every one of his men would have suffered quite as badly at the hands of the farmers if the victory at Sedgemoor had been reversed.

Meanwhile, that craven, the Duke of Monmouth, with Lord Grey and Buyse, a German adventurer, was racing for the New Forest, where he hoped to find shelter. With fresh horses obtained in Chedzoy, the three turned southeast. When their horses gave out under them, they changed to peasants' clothes, hid bridles and saddles, and went cross-country on foot, avoiding all farmhouses and towns. They did not dare ask for food, but lived on berries and raw peas.

The militia were seeking them. The large reward for the Duke, dead or alive, stirred up a great number of persons. The net closed in upon the three fugitives; they were seen in a field of brambles; Grey was captured; then Buyse; finally they hauled Monmouth out of the bushes. A fine sight he was! His beard, the story goes, was prematurely gray. His clothes were in rags. His cheeks were sunken, dirty. His eyes were bloodshot. In his pockets they found a prayer book, some raw peas, a little money, and a Cross of St. George—the highest distinction in England.

The captives were taken to London. Grey was cheerful, and chatting with the officers on the trip.[3] Monmouth was frightened, and showed it.

[3] Grey has been accused of cowardice. It is true that he went with his command when, fired upon at Sedgemoor, it bolted wildly. But there is no proof that he did not do his best to rally the men; and it should be remembered that they were raw soldiers mounted on horses which had never been under fire. Grey might have been a poor soldier, but there is no justification for calling him a coward. He returned to Monmouth's side while the battle was still in progress; and although he fled with Monmouth, he might easily have reasoned that he was doing the honorable thing, since the Duke was his general and his friend, and also, as he believed, his rightful king. He was the only person of any rank in Monmouth's army. His behavior after his capture, even if it

They were sentenced to death. Monmouth wept and tore his hair; he strove by every means possible to gain an audience with the King—the King, his own uncle, whom he had called murderer, traitor, usurper. Finally he succeeded. Why James consented to see him is a mystery, for he had no intention of granting a pardon. Monmouth, his arms pinioned with silken cords, fell on his knees before James and bleated appeals for his life. He would retire from politics, retire from military life, take residence far from England, give up what was left of his fortune, implore all his friends and supporters to rally to King James, who was, Monmouth now said, the one and only legitimate King.

He wept. He crawled closer, and tried to embrace James's knees with his pinioned arms. He kissed James's feet. He even hinted that he might change his religion to please James.

The King eagerly offered to summon a priest. Did Monmouth really want to save his soul before going to the block?

The block! No, Monmouth decided that he did not care so much about saving his soul. He was taken away.

His wife was given permission to call upon him, and appeared with their children. But he treated her coldly. He was in love with Harriet Wentworth, he said, and always would be; he had never been in love with his wife. There is no doubt that this was true, but it was scarcely polite.

The execution attracted a big crowd. The axeman lost his nerve at the last minute and did a sloppy job, striking again and again, badly mutilating the Duke; finally it was necessary to cut away the last bit of flesh with a knife.

But the real butchery was reserved for the judiciary.

had not been inevitably contrasted with Monmouth's whimpering, would have been esteemed admirable.

For this James had his man. George Jeffreys was then Chief Justice of the Court of the King's Bench. Charles the Second, a shrewd judge of character, had said of him: "That man has no learning, no sense, no manners, and more impudence than ten streetwalkers." Charles had used him occasionally when there was dirty work to be done, but he had never elevated the man. James, on the other hand, gave Jeffreys, after Sedgemoor, every opportunity his fiendish soul could have desired. There were many conferences in London before the Bloody Assizes were instituted in the West, and Jeffreys knew just what was expected of him. He had helped to deprive many cities of their charters, in order to pack Parliament to the King's taste; he had presided over the judicial murder of Algernon Sidney. But all that had been child's play. Now he was, according to his own boast, to hang more men than had all the English judges put together since the Norman Conquest.

Usually drunk, always insulting, he made no pretense of fairness. Mercy was a commodity to be sold, never to be given away; those who could not afford it were proper subjects for Jeffreys's obscenity and cruelty. He went about his work systematically. In the county of Somerset there were about 1,000 prisoners; only six days were allowed to indict, receive the pleas of, and try all of them. Nearly all pleaded guilty. Guilty or innocent, that was their one chance to avoid death. The regular executioners were not nearly numerous enough for the work on hand; so amateurs were engaged—men who frequently did clumsy jobs, adding to the general horror. "Nothing could be liker Hell than these parts," wrote Oldmixon: "cauldrons hissing, carcasses boiling, pitch and tar sparkling and glowing, bloody limbs boiling, and tearing,

and mangling. . . ." Heads, arms, legs, quarters of torsos, all were hung in public places, after the established custom, and the stench was almost unbearable.[4]

One of the first prisoners arraigned was Alice Lisle, of an excellent and loyal family, herself almost stone deaf and very old. She was sentenced to be burned for harboring two escaped rebels. She bore herself with admirable calmness, petitioning King James only to change the sentence to one of beheading, as more fitting to her station in life. This the King did.

One young man, for no more than a speech suspected of being seditious, was sentenced to be whipped in every market town in Somersetshire every day for seven years. Even one of the court officers protested at this, begging Jeffreys to reduce the sentence to whipping once every fortnight for seven years. Jeffries laughed.

Some of the prisoners were sold. Ninety-eight of them were sent from Taunton to the Queen; they brought her something between £1,000 and £1,500, and were shipped away to sweat out the rest of their lives on American plantations—if they survived the horrors of the voyage. The Queen's maids-of-honor were given the children who had been convicted of bringing flowers to Monmouth, and the maids-of-honor divided some £2,000 after this deal.

Hannah Hawling's two brothers, both in their early twenties, were haled before Jeffreys. She went to Whitehall to intercede for them with the King. In an anteroom she met

[4] It is only fair to warn the reader that the historian Oldmixon, upon whose report most of the descriptions of the Bloody Assizes are largely based, was a mere boy at the time these things occurred, and that as a resident of Somerset county he was reared in an atmosphere of intense local prejudice. It is quite possible that his account is an unwitting exaggeration.

Lord Churchill, and pleaded with him. He shook his head sadly. "I wish well to your suit, Madam, but I dare not flatter you with any false hopes." He pointed to a mantelpiece. "That marble is as capable of feeling compassion as the King's heart." The Hawling boys were hanged.

Churchill appears only once more in connection with the Bloody Assizes and again in a commendable light. Henry, Lord Delamere, was being tried for high treason by a jury of thirty of his peers, of whom Churchill was one. The King himself was present when they filed in with their decision. Churchill, as junior baron, voted first: "Not guilty, upon my honor." The others voted the same.

There remained then nothing but to distribute the rewards. Jeffreys, already wealthy with bribe money, was made Lord Chancellor, and King James personally thanked him and all the other justices of the Bloody Assizes. My Lord Feversham was decorated with the Order of the Garter. Churchill had been correct when he had predicted that "the troble is mine, and the honour will be another's." He got another colonelcy—that of the third troop of Life Guards.

CHAPTER NINE

Whispers, Whispers

ARGYLE had been executed; Monmouth had been executed. But cold-scheming William remained. *He* was not one to go off at half-cock, nor would he lose his nerve in a crisis. Not William. On the other hand, nobody was better aware that the throne was not to be knocked from under James by sheer force of arms. He had different, surer methods. Spies in his employ were circulating quietly among the leading English peers. The chief of these was Van Dykvelt, whom William had sent to London with a message of congratulations to James on his accession. Lingering long after that official message had been officially delivered, Van Dykvelt managed to give (and to take) many promises. Among the first persons he approached was Jack Churchill.

You might suppose that William of Orange would scarcely hope to gain the support of such a man. For Churchill had been, at fourteen, one of James's pages. He had obtained his first commission in the army from James. With James he had gone into exile—to Brussels, to Edinburgh. He had been elevated to the peerage and given a seat in Parliament by James. He had met Sarah Jennings in James's own household; and Queen Marie-Beatrice, who was then Duchess of York, had been the sole witness of their marriage, which she had made possible.[1] He had fought for James against an

[1] Marie-Beatrice, knowing that only lack of money stood between the two smitten young persons, had in the most delicate manner conceivable offered Sarah a large cash wedding gift. This the girl had at first refused, for she was truly sensitive. But Marie gently persisted, in time Sarah accepted, and the marriage was made possible.

old comrade, Monmouth, and more than any other individual had been responsible for Monmouth's defeat. What would he, then, have to do with treason?

But there were at least three good reasons why Van Dykvelt approached Jack Churchill.

The first was that Churchill was the foremost military figure in the three kingdoms. His actual rank might be only that of major general; politics might force him to accept orders from stuffed uniforms like Feversham; but the men who carried the muskets trusted Churchill above every one, regarding him as their real chief.

The second reason was that Lady Churchill could answer for Princess Anne. The people liked Anne, and it would assist William greatly if his chubby sister-in-law were to turn to him against her own father. The thing would not seem possible at first glance, for James, whatever his faults, had always been a fond and indulgent parent. But Anne was incredibly weak, a woman without any will of her own. To whatever Sarah Churchill said, Anne replied yes; whatever Sarah suggested, Anne approved. Also Anne was a bigoted Anglican who trembled every time she remembered that her father was a Roman Catholic: she fluttered excitedly, fearfully awaiting the time when her father would try to force her conversion, and determined to be a martyr. In fact, James never made the slightest attempt to influence his daughter's religious beliefs. But Anne continued to tremble. And—more important to William—even that trembling was controlled by Anne's beloved companion, Mrs. Morley's *dear* Mrs. Freeman.

The third but not the least important reason was the very fact that Churchill *was* the last person any one would

expect to find plotting with the Dutchman's agents. He was, it is true, a Protestant; but every other interest he had, and every association, were involved with the King. He would not be suspected.

So Van Dykvelt whispered; and Churchill listened. He was becoming a politician now. He was listening. We do not know what answer he made to the first proposals, if he made any. Certainly he refused to commit himself in writing at this time: he was too wary to do that. But he *did* listen—if not the first time, or the second, then the third or fourth time that Van Dykvelt slid up to his side.

Doubtless he discussed the matter with Sarah. It would have been interesting to attend those discussions. The two had been faithful for a long time to a man possessed of a genius for doing things wrongly and apparently no gratitude at all. My Lord had served assiduously and well with scant reward. Littler men, who had given less, had been raised higher than he: the case of Feversham was not an exceptional one. Jack Churchill was middle-aged now, and he had apparently reached the peak of his importance under a master so short-sighted as James.

Certainly, in any case, there was likely to be a great change in England soon, and it would be well at least to provide against emergencies. You never knew what was going to happen. The Parliamentarians, at first seemingly set back by Monmouth's defeat, actually were stronger than ever. Pointing to the danger to which the capital had for a time been exposed, King James demanded and got appropriations for a larger standing army. But the Shaftesbury crowd (although Shaftesbury himself was in exile) made full use of these demands; for the idea of a large standing army, they

knew, remained abhorrent to a people who still remembered the hardships of the Cromwell régime.

And James did not show well after the western uprising. He was as merciful as most princes in such circumstances, more merciful than many. But it was easy to make him out a monster, and the Parliamentarians did so.

James had appointed Frances Jennings's second husband, Lying Dick Talbot, now Earl of Tyrconnell, his Royal Commissioner in Ireland. Talbot was a massive Catholic, handsome, brutal, and energetic. Unhampered by Parliament, he set about raising a large Catholic army in Ireland; for James, worried about his English army, which had resisted his efforts to give commissions to Catholics, was endeavoring to officer it with recruits from Ireland—a proceeding which naturally aroused the suspicions and anger of good Englishmen.

Meanwhile, Sarah Churchill was proving prolific. Her first child, born in London before she had joined her husband in Edinburgh, had died. The second, Henrietta, was born in the Summer of 1681, in the Scottish capital. The third had been born shortly after Churchill was created Baron Aymouth, and was christened Anne in honor of the Princess. Jack jr. was born January 12, 1686, and Betty on March 15, 1687.

These children appeared in the shadow of tremendous events. Whispers eddied in ever-widening circles like ripples in a disturbed pool; messengers in deep disguise sneaked back and forth between England and Holland; gentlemen of high rank and estate nightly were settling details of extraordinary events yet to occur, while these children slept peacefully in their cots.

Sappers and miners were at work preparing for an explosion which was to shake the world.

How long it would have been before the eagle-faced Dutchman touched off the fuse, we can never know. He was a good waiter, and he was determined to succeed where others had failed. It was Marie-Beatrice who forced his hand.

It became known that the Queen, for the first time in five years, was pregnant. This was not unusual in itself. She was still in her twenties, her husband was fifty-four. She had already borne him four children, all of whom had died young: Isabella, at the age of five, had been the last.

But now if she bore James a son, and the son lived, William was an indefinitely long step removed from the throne. To be sure, Mary, and not William, was next in succession anyway. But a great change had come over Mary. She had fallen in love with her husband. Docile and obedient, she who had formerly been so proud was prepared to turn over to him anything and everything she possessed; and if she became Queen, then William became King, regardless of what formal designation Parliament might see fit to affix upon him. But she would not become Queen if the infant the Italian woman was carrying was a boy.

The plotters of that age were like women: when they were trapped, they resorted instinctively to falsehood. This time the lie was that Queen Marie was not pregnant at all and that the Jesuits around King James were preparing to do a bit of sleight-of-hand in order to foist a spurious prince upon the nation. A people that had believed the discordant fabrications of Titus Oates would believe this. And as in Oates's time, the men who knew better, who should have checked the story, were the very men who most wanted

it to be circulated. Catholics outside the court made matters worse by crowing with delight at the prospect of another Catholic king, and offering to bet odds that the infant would be male; this appeared very significant to a people that still nursed the suspicion that all Catholics shared a great common secret and spoke a mysterious language known only to themselves.

James, if he heard it at all, did not consider the tale worthy of regal recognition. He had a ponderous, top-heavy dignity, and he was constantly doing the wrong thing, partly because he had a natural talent for making mistakes, and partly because his advisors deliberately urged them upon him. It was time for compromise. He was in a bad position, and should have sacrificed cargo to save the ship. But he simply could not get the basic idea of politics. What he was doing, he believed was right; and if the nation did not like it, that was just too bad. He went on pleading for toleration, at the same time playing into the hands of those who were most eager to stir up intolerance. He was William's best agent.

The quarrel between the Crown and Parliament was clear enough. Parliament said that Roman Catholics must not hold public office in England. James contended that Parliament had no right to decree this, and that his own dispensing power gave him authority to set aside the Test Act. James fought in the open, simply, directly, in the only manner he knew. His enemies fought variously: they had no code, fixed themselves no limits, and did not attempt to select appropriate weapons, but on the theory that all's fair in love and law utilized every cudgel that came conveniently to hand. Some of them were honorable men who really be-

lieved that the King sought to betray his people to Rome. Others were rascals. And the rascals predominated—if not in numbers, then certainly in influence.

Early in his reign James had startled and annoyed his subjects by publishing a Declaration of Indulgence, which in effect was a setting aside of the Test Act by the Crown. Now, at the worst time he could possibly have selected for this, when the storm clouds were gathering thick above him, he put forth a Second Declaration of Indulgence. It reiterated what the King had said in his first declaration, merely assuring the nation that he had not changed his mind. But there was an eruption of protests when the King, as legal head of the Church of England, commanded that this second declaration be read from all the pulpits of the land on stated Sundays.

It was a display of poor taste at best; at worst it was an act of arbitrary kingship, a threat to popular government. In this latter light most of the people preferred to view it. The heads of the Church of England were obliged by it either to declare for equal rights for Roman Catholics or disobey the acknowledged head of their church. The Archbishop of Canterbury and six other eminent divines signed a petition to the King to withdraw his command. This petition they presented on a Friday night; it was on the following Sunday that they were supposed to order the declaration read in the churches. James was furious. "A standard of rebellion!" he cried, waving the petition. The bishops implored him not to consider it such; they were shocked by his language. But James cried again: "A standard of rebellion!" He was very angry.

The Prime Minister, Sunderland, begged James to recall

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his command, for compromise, Sunderland said, was vitally necessary. Charles would have done so—if we could imagine Charles getting himself into such a political jam in the first place. But not James.

The next day, Saturday, cheap copies of the petition were all over the city. The Parliamentarians had played a clever game. James was exposed before he had an opportunity to decide what to do. If he granted the petition and recalled the obnoxious order, as the wily Sunderland urged him to do, he would be admitting to all his people that he was less powerful than his own nobles. If, on the other hand, he refused to grant the petition, he would be compelling seven of the most highly respected persons in England to do something they considered illegal. Mystery surrounds the publication of the petition. Sancroft, the Archbishop, declared that there had been but one copy—the original, which the King himself held. Yet somehow the thing had been printed and prepared for distribution even before the King had seen it. Nor could any amount of zealous investigation establish where or by whose orders the petition had been published.

That Sunday the Second Declaration of Indulgence was read in only four churches in London, and in each of these a large part of the congregation got up and walked out when the reading started. The seven bishops had disobeyed their king. Sunderland continued to urge compromise. James insisted that it was no time to compromise—that compromise had brought death to his own father, Charles the First. He caused proceedings to be started against the seven bishops, who were specifically accused of seditious libel.

Public feeling ran high. No doubt things were going badly for the King. The whisperers kept after Churchill. William

had his own wife write to Sarah. The two women, it was common knowledge, did not like each other, and Mary was jealous of Sarah's influence over Anne. But Mary stifled her jealousy, like a good wife, and wrote: "Your friendship makes my sister as dear to you as to me, and I am persuaded we shall ever agree in our care of her, as, I believe, she and I should, in our kindness for you, were we near enough to renew our acquaintance." Again Mary wrote: "I . . . assure you that I shall never forget the kindness you showed to her who is so dear to me. That, and all the good I have heard of you, will make me ever your affectionate friend, *which I shall be ready to show otherwise than by words, when I have the opportunity.*" The italics were not Mary's, but they were probably Sarah's. Sarah and her husband must have read that letter many times, thoughtfully.

James was trying to get a Parliament which would accept his policy of tolerance. About the House of Lords he was not worried, for as King he possessed the power to create as many peers as he pleased, and as Sunderland said to Churchill, in the course of a discussion about this, "Why, your whole troop of horse guards will be called up to the House of Lords if it's necessary." But the Commons presented another problem, remaining hostile in spite of every effort made by the King to get his friends elected.

The storm clouds were lowering, and more numerous. Everything depended now upon whether the child Marie-Beatrice would bear was a boy or girl.

Friends of the King were telling him what he could not see for himself—that William was plotting for the throne. King Louis of France warned his cousin repeatedly. But James refused to believe this. Did he not correspond regularly

and informally with his son-in-law, and did not every one of William's letters protest unalterable affection? Was not Mary, to whom he had been such a fond father, William's wife? Would *she,* of all persons in the world, tolerate plotting against her father in her own court?

Jack Churchill assured Van Dykvelt that he would always adhere to King James—unless the King jeopardized the Church of England. It was the current formula for quieting conscience.

The seven bishops were haled before the Court of the King's Bench. They were asked to enter into recognizances, but on advice of counsel they refused to do so, being peers of the realm. Another victory for the Parliamentarians, for this left no choice but to send them to the Tower of London. Probably no seven prisoners anywhere were ever treated with more respect. They had all they could wish for; rooms had been especially fitted out for them; the most important personages of the kingdom visited them night and day, without restriction of any kind. The governor of the Tower, Sir Edward Hales, was himself a Roman Catholic, appointed by James, but the very guards assigned to keep the bishops in custody, all Protestants, spent their time drinking toasts to the health and prosperity of the prisoners. Nevertheless, the fact remained that a Roman Catholic had caused seven of the most exalted divines of the Anglican Church to be jailed, and the public was wild with indignation.

To make matters worse, James, with incredible childishness, commanded the chaplain of the Tower to read the Second Declaration of Indulgence at his Sunday services before the seven distinguished prisoners, and when the chaplain refused to do so, summarily dismissed him.

When the bishops were brought to trial the court room was packed and there were great crowds outside. Hearing of the case occupied one court day. The jurors were locked up for the night, without food or drink, to argue themselves to a decision. All that night London held its breath. At six o'clock in the morning the jurors came to an agreement; at ten o'clock court was reopened and the decision announced.

The bishops were acquitted—not on a technicality, but on the ground that the Declaration of Indulgence was illegal in the first place.

James was in Lord Feversham's tent in the camp at Hounslow Heath when the news was brought to him. He started back for London promptly. Behind him, as he went, rose a great shout of joy. The King inquired what this meant, and was answered, "Nothing—just the soldiers celebrating the acquittal."

"Do you call that nothing?" growled the King.

That night he looked out of a window at Whitehall to see a huge bonfire in front of the palace. London was expressing its delight with bonfires; they were in every street. In the windows of many houses, high and humble, were lighted candles in branches of seven, the middle one tallest to represent the Archbishop. Around the homes of the seven martyrs were wildly enthusiastic crowds; while around the homes of prominent Catholics were crowds of a quite different temper. Two men were stripped naked in the streets and the initials "R. C." were branded upon their bodies. Some windows were broken. But for the most part there was little violence—only an exuberant display of joyous feeling. No less than three waxen images of the Pope were carried through three separate parts of the city, each at the head of a large

procession, finally to be burned with great pomp and merriment. It was a bad night for the Church of Rome; and even James, blind and deaf James, must have been troubled.

Meantime, the Queen's child was born. It had been announced that this event was expected in early July; but the night after the bishops were thrown into the Tower, Marie-Beatrice, who had been playing cards at Whitehall, suddenly called for her sedan chair and was transported in haste to St. James's palace, where apartments had been prepared for the lying-in.

Why St. James's was used, instead of the more usual residence of the King, Whitehall, was not explained. Probably Marie-Beatrice preferred St. James's: it was there she had first come when she arrived in England; there she had been as Duchess of York (when not in exile), and there she had borne her first four children. Perhaps she thought she would be more comfortable there, in her old lodgings. But the anti-Catholic party made much of the swift switch of palaces, launching the whisper that the King had wanted the false lying-in at St. James's because there were secret staircases and doorways there.

Notables came by every gate. But all who should have been there were not there. The Dutch ambassador certainly should have been present. He was not invited, and why he was not invited was never explained. Others are more easily accounted for. They were invited but didn't choose to attend. One of these was Jack Churchill, who had his own reasons for not going to the "Queen's labor."

Princess Anne was not there: she was taking the waters at Bath. Why? Macaulay asserts that Anne "had determined to be present and vigilant when the critical day should arrive;

but she had not thought it necessary to be at her post a month before that day." But Anne had had plentiful experience of her own with child-bearing (she was pregnant at this time) and knew better than to believe that exactly nine months, neither more nor less, invariably elapse between conception and birth. Lord Macaulay to the contrary notwithstanding, it seems much more probable that Princess Anne had determined *not* to be "present and vigilant" when the critical day arrived. *Cherchez la femme* once again. Sarah Jennings Churchill, who herself knew about such things as seven- and eight-months babies, was with Anne.

The baby was born and it was a boy. The bedchamber was crowded with personages. Many of these, to be sure, were Catholics, but it does not necessarily follow that they were liars who would assist in a conspiracy to defraud their own nation. It is true that not all these persons actually *saw* the child in the process of birth: this was reserved for the midwife, the bedcurtains being drawn.

The lie must be whittled to fit the circumstances, so word went out that James and the Jesuits *had smuggled a new-born babe into the Queen's bed in a warming pan!*

And that lie was believed. The way had been smoothed by the story that Queen Marie was not pregnant at all, and that the Jesuits were preparing to give the nation a false heir. It was preposterous. But it was believed. And the fact that it was believed is proof of the stupendous structure of falsehood the Williamites had raised, of the limitless labors they had undergone to prepare for this event.

The Dutchman ("not himself suspecting foul play, and not aware of the state of public feeling in England"—Macaulay) when he learned of the birth ordered public prayers

to be recited in his own palace. He also dispatched a representative to James's court with formal congratulations. The representative, Zulestein, was able to report to his chief soon afterward that not one person in ten to whom he talked believed Queen Marie really had given birth to a child.

Princess Anne herself expressed a doubt. She had been at Bath, so how she knew that the baby was not Marie's is indeed a mystery. Anne could not remember her own mother, but her stepmother had treated her with sweetness and thoughtfulness always. Yet Anne, without hearing any evidence, branded that stepmother and her own father as cheats and liars. Why? Sarah Jennings Churchill.

Princess Mary expressed a doubt. What did Mary know about it? She was in The Hague when the child was born. But her husband was aiming at the English throne, and she was a dutiful wife.

King James, delighted when he learned of the sex of his child, soon afterward was overwhelmed with indignation at what the public thought of it. At first he tried to ignore the story. But even he came to perceive in time that the future of his family was at stake, and he submitted to what must have been one of the most humiliating experiences of his public life. He called into extraordinary session some of the leading men of the nation—ministers, members of Parliament, divines, soldiers. Jack Churchill was present: this affair was not so easily avoided as the Queen's labor, for then the haste and confusion had made excuses more plausible. But although a throne chair was put out for Princess Anne at this meeting, she did not appear, pleading illness.

James caused the Dowager Queen, Catharine of Braganza, to tell her tale; she had been at the royal bedside throughout

the birth. He caused the midwife, and others, to tell their tales. All averred that the child, the Prince of Wales, was without doubt Marie's own.

The ministers, Parliament members, divines, soldiers, listened in silence; and in silence, afterward, they filed out. They did nothing. Probably every one of them knew in his heart that the baby was the son of James and his wife; but they had good reason for not voicing that conviction.

All this must have been in James's mind when he stood at the window that night the bishops were acquitted, and watched the bonfires of London.

Elsewhere, the Dutchman cried "*Aut nunc, aut nunquam*"—now or never.

CHAPTER TEN

The Honor of a Soldier

THE time for plotting had passed; the time for action had arrived. The very next day a message started to the Prince of Orange. William of course could not invade England without some sort of excuse. This had been prepared. Now he demanded an invitation as well; and the invitation was prepared also. Henry Sidney—an indolent, gazelle-eyed dandy, still, at fifty-odd, the terror of husbands—carried it to The Hague. On it, in code, were the signatures of the Earl of Shrewsbury, the Earl of Devonshire, Lord Danby, Lord Lumley, Bishop Compton, Admiral Russell, and Sidney himself. William was formally implored to cross and protect the Protestant religion in England.

Now William was a Calvinist, as remote as any Catholic from the Church of England, which he despised. But when he was asked by seven English politicians to protect that church by dethroning his father-in-law, he responded with a disconcerting promptness. He wrote a letter to King James, assuring him of his own undying attachment to the House of Stuart; he gathered 15,000 men about him and put them into more than 600 ships; he posted the letter; and he sailed for England.

All this could not be done over-night. William had been preparing for many months. James had been warned repeatedly, but refused to believe.

Louis the Fourteenth, understandably anxious to keep William from gaining more power, and always a good friend of his cousin King James, took matters into his own hands. If James would not save himself, Louis would save him. A large French force was ready to move at a moment's notice against the States General. The Dutch knew that they could not hope to invade England and defend their own territory against the French at the same time; it seemed that William was stopped when Louis made public announcement that the King of England was his ally and that any move against the House of Stuart would be considered a declaration of war upon France.

James himself saved the situation for his enemy. "My good brother," he said condescendingly of Louis, "has many excellent qualities, but flattery and vanity have turned his head." England could stand on her own feet, and England's King could remain on his own throne, without the assistance of any other nation. Did the King of France think that the King of England, Scotland and Ireland was some petty princeling who had to be protected by French armies? James rejected the aid Louis offered him. James was a pig-headed fool.

Louis threw up his arms in despair, and instead of invading Holland he surprised every one by invading the German states along the Rhine. His immediate successes there were considerable, but in the long run he lost heavily, for the attack on Germany left the way to England clear for William.

William's own proclamation brought James to his senses at last. Copies were being distributed secretly; a package of them was confiscated by officers of the crown and sent to James. He read, and the blood left his face. It was some time

before he could speak, or even move. Then he hastily threw all but one of the copies into a fireplace, and that one he clutched in his two hands jealously, reading it over and over again; he seemed to think it would be dangerous even to let any other person see the edict he held, although copies of it were already scattered over his kingdoms.

So William was coming because he had been invited by peers of the realm, "temporal and spiritual"? Three of the principal temporal peers were near by; James questioned them and they told him truthfully that they had not been parties to the invitation. He called in an old acquaintance—the tutor of his daughters, Compton, Bishop of London—and in private closet asked him if he had any idea who the peers spiritual might be. Now Compton was himself the "peers spiritual," the only churchman who had signed the invitation. He was one of the most bigoted and most ignorant of the Anglican divines, and was wont to fulminate noisily against the prevaricating Jesuits who surrounded King James. But he *was* a bishop, and could not tell a lie. He answered: "I am sure that all my fellow bishops are no more guilty than I." That satisfied James.

The next day, however, the King summoned all the bishops before him (bishops, since the night of bonfires, appear to have frightened him irrationally) and asked them, one by one, if they had signed an invitation to William. And one by one they assured him that they hadn't. When it came Compton's turn, that worthy answered: "I gave Your Majesty my answer yesterday."

James sent an urgent summons to Ireland for 3,000 troops. He called up the regiments from Scotland. He began to concentrate the English army at Salisbury Plain. He com-

manded Lord Dartmouth, admiral of the fleet, to intercept the Dutch.

Dartmouth did his best, but the winds were against him. Prince William landed all his men safely at Torbay on November 6; they held the customary prayers, tightened their sword belts and put muskets over their shoulders, and marched to Exeter.

In court there was terrible confusion. The wildest rumors were coming in on every breeze from the south. William had 50,000 men, he had 100,000, or 500,000. He had forty field-pieces, eighty, three hundred. Spies were dispatched to the Prince's camp; they remained in the Prince's camp. It was plain that a powerful traitor was at work very close to James. Upon whom could he rely? Obviously only upon the army, commanded by faithfuls like Feversham and Churchill. He was preparing to go to Salisbury Plain to lead the army in person when word was brought that young Lord Cornbury, son of the Earl of Clarendon, father of James's first wife and member of one of the oldest and most loyal families of the kingdom, had gone over to the Dutchman, leading with him as many of his command as he could induce to accompany him—some two hundred. It was a terrible blow. It was also a mysterious one. Cornbury himself, a weak stripling, would never have ventured it alone: someone had prompted him, pushed him. His father, the aged earl, came in tears to King James, begging to be forgiven for having begot such an ungrateful, such a traitorous boy. James quieted the Earl, and with uncommon graciousness assured him that he was convinced, at least, of *his* undying loyalty.

A few days later the Earl himself deserted to William. But that is ahead of the story.

James called before him the principal officers of his army and spoke to them frankly. If their political or religious scruples, he said, prohibited them from fighting for him, let them say so now and lay down their commands. They were forgiven in advance. There would be no punishments. But he wanted to be certain that the army held no more Lord Cornburys; he wanted to know that he was dealing with honorable men who would fight in the open. Would, then, these gentlemen follow him? He paused.

The first to step out of line was Jack Churchill. He fell to one knee, kissed James's hand, and assured his king that he would follow him to the death. The others, one by one, did likewise.

James was touched. Perhaps he had been wrong, after all, in that flash of suspicion. He thanked the officers, and they retired to make preparations for Salisbury.

James was fifty-four years old, and he had led a hard life. He was not well: he suffered from splitting headaches and bleeding at the nose. But he was, after all, King of England, Scotland, and Ireland. He was a Stuart. His own people would not desert him—certainly not his own companions, the men he had cared for and raised in his service. He was in better humor than he had been for many days when Lord Feversham and Lord Forbes came warning him that Churchill was often in the company of that young whippersnapper the Duke of Grafton, a son of Charles the Second by Barbara Palmer. Feversham and Forbes believed that Churchill was only waiting for a chance to desert. But James laughed at this. *Jack Churchill* desert? It was nonsense. To show his confidence in the man, he made him a lieutenant general and put him in charge of a brigade.

There were a few desertions. The rank and file stuck to their places, being not much interested one way or the other —like the rank and file of the populace, who probably preferred James to a foreigner but who had no intention of losing any blood for either. But the commissioned officers began to go. Prince George of Denmark, Anne's corpulent husband, was at supper with the King in Salisbury when word was brought that Sir Edward Seymour had joined William at Exeter. "*Est-il possible?*" said the Prince. Word came that Devonshire had taken possession of Nottingham in the name of the invader. "*Est-il possible?*" the Prince cried. Then they learned that Delamere was raising the anti-Catholics in Cheshire, and that the garrison at Plymouth, at the instigation of the Earl of Bath, one of James's most trusted friends, had declared for William. And Prince George exclaimed: "*Est-il possible?*"

The King called a council of war on the night of November 24, almost three weeks after William had landed. Most of the generals advised him to retreat beyond the Thames; he was in command of an army probably greater in numbers than William's, but he did not know whom to trust, and he had been obliged to leave a large force to keep the capital quiet—a force he could pick up on his way back through London. Churchill alone advised advance and battle. Why he did so we may guess, but never know positively for it was the best possible advice he could have given James. William desired, above everything, to avoid battle; not because he was afraid—William was never that—but because he knew that a victory would bring eventual defeat, for it would cause the English people suddenly to resent this invasion and rally around their king.

James did not make up his mind that night. He was tired, and his head ached. As he was preparing to go to bed he learned that Prince George of Denmark had left the camp and was riding to Exeter. "What, little *Est-il possible* gone too!" Well, *he* never would be missed. "I mind him only as connected with my dearest child," said James. "Otherwise the loss of one stout trooper would have been greater." But think of how badly Anne would feel when she learned that her husband had deserted. Poor Anne!

Then came a stunning blow to climax that night of disappointment and despair. James was handed this note:

"Sir,—Since men are seldom suspected of sincerity when they act contrary to their interests, and though my dutiful behavior to your Majesty in the worst of times (for which I acknowledge my poor services much overpaid) may not be sufficient to induce you to a charitable interpretation of my actions, yet I hope the great advantage I enjoy under your Majesty, which I can never expect in any other change of government, may reasonably convince your Majesty and the world that I am actuated by a higher principle when I offer that violence to my inclination and interest as to desert your Majesty at a time when your affairs seem to challenge the strictest obedience from all your subjects, much more one who lies under the greatest obligations to your Majesty. This, Sir, could proceed from nothing but the inviolable dictates of my conscience and a necessary concern for my religion (which no good man can oppose) and with which I am instructed nothing can come in competition. Heaven knows with what partiality my dutiful opinion of your Majesty has hitherto represented those unhappy designs which incon-

siderate and self-interested men have framed against your Majesty's true interest and the Protestant religion, but as I can no longer join with such to give a pretence by conquest to bring them into effect, so I will alway with the hazard of my life and fortune (so much your Majesty's due) endeavour to preserve your Royal person and lawful rights, with all the tender concern and dutiful respect that becomes, Sir, your Majesty's most dutiful and most obliged servant, Churchill."

That ended the business. That would snick the vitality from the army as swiftly and neatly as a housewife jerks the backbone out of a sliced mackerel. Those officers who had gone before were only the first drops of the flood. Now that Jack Churchill had deserted, the gates of the dam were open. Already reports of other defections were coming in—Trelawney, Charles Churchill, Kirke, the Duke of Grafton.

James went to bed. We may doubt that he slept. The first thing he did the next morning was order a retreat.

Men who ought to have known better subsequently accused James of cowardice. The fact is, the poor fellow had nothing left to do but retreat. His men probably would be faithful to him, but what good were the men without generals and colonels? How could his troopers be expected to act when they could not depend upon their own officers? And who was left? There was Feversham, an incompetent. The Duke of Berwick, James's own son by Arabella Churchill, was promising but still a youngster and hopelessly inexperienced. Kirke and Trelawney, excellent soldiers, capable commanders, had followed the real master of the lot—Jack Churchill. The countryside all around James and the cap-

ital behind him were rumbling dangerously. The earls of Manchester, Stamford, Rutland, and Chesterfield, four of the most powerful noblemen of the North, had declared for the invader. Bath was holding Plymouth for William. The western counties, remembering the horrors of the Bloody Assizes and suffering from the curious delusion that their beloved Duke of Monmouth had risen from the dead and was about to lead them to glory, were rising in arms. Devonshire had taken Nottingham and Derby too. Bristol had surrendered willingly enough to Shrewsbury. York was in revolt, so was Gloucester. And James had no way of learning how many men were marching under his son-in-law's standard: they might number, as rumor declared, hundreds of thousands.

But most of all, I think, James was prompted to retreat because of Churchill. The letter Churchill had left was in his own handwriting, but it must have been written for him and copied by him, for he never spelled so well as that. At any rate, it showed considerable preparation and forethought. Grafton's desertion became clear now, and Cornbury's—for Grafton had been much in Jack Churchill's company of late, and Cornbury had been easily influenced by Sarah Churchill. Kirke and Trelawney were close personal friends of Jack Churchill, and Charles Churchill was his own brother.

Yet only the previous night Jack Churchill had urged an attack upon William's army. What did that signify? We may guess that Churchill did so confident that James would not adopt the suggestion in the face of a council otherwise advocating retreat, and confident also that if James *did* adopt the suggestion he himself could hold the potential deserters

in line and defeat William's army, covering himself with glory. In other words, Jack Churchill could not lose. But we may understand that James would believe that Churchill's advice to advance and fight indicated a deep-laid plan of betrayal to the enemy, and so, still without straining our understanding, we can see why James, who didn't know whom to trust now, ordered a retreat. It was not cowardice; it was, for James, common sense.

He stumbled back to London. And there, directly upon his arrival, he learned that the previous night his daughter Anne had left the Cockpit and had gone to join the invader.

James had sent ahead an order for the searching of Churchill's country home at St. Albans and his apartments in the city, and another order for the arrest of Lady Churchill. But Anne was not going to stand idly by and watch her *dear* Mrs. Freeman seized by minions of the law. "I would jump out of a window before I'd do that," declared Anne. Secrecy was necessary. That Sunday, after midnight, Sarah Jennings Churchill and Lady Fitzharding had accompanied her out of a back entrance of the Cockpit. Lord Dorset and the veracious Bishop Compton were waiting with a hackney coach. There was a heavy rain, and under their cloaks the ladies wore many orange ribbands in honor of Prince William. One of the Princess's high-heeled slippers was lost in the mud; it could not be easily found, and rather than waste time searching, Dorset put one of his own gauntlets on the royal foot. This act was the occasion for much giggling, and the party was very gay when the hackney coach drove off.

"God help me!" James cried. "My own children have forsaken me!"

THE REVOLUTION OF 1688. WILLIAM OF ORANGE ENTERING EXETER

At Exeter, in the candlelight, *Le Bel Anglais* was kneeling before the Dutch Monster, pledging obedience. Any good-looking person supplied a contrast to William of Orange, but this contrast must have been peculiarly fascinating.

For the two had characteristics in common. One was born a prince, the other a pauper. One was almost ferociously haughty, and usually impolite; the other compromised without hesitation—a back-slapping politician with perfect manners. But they were double dealers, both of them—and never forget that they were both fighting men.

William's lank hair no longer fell over his face. He had bought a periwig, a black one, which he wore reluctantly, for he worried about the expense. His chin was on his chest. His black broad-brimmed hat was pulled low, and underneath it his eyes were terrible. He looked more than ever like an eagle. His hands too—long, dry, bony, and crooked—were like talons. He stood awkwardly, and I think sneeringly a little, while the latest traitor kissed one of those hands, pledging obedience.

My Lord Churchill was in the prime of life—large, bland, smoothly healthy. He wore his clothes well. He moved easily and with confidence; and he knelt like a man who is accustomed to kneeling. His features were regular, his legs shapely. His eyes were all innocence and profound sincerity. In a soft, womanly voice (William's voice rasped, like sandpaper on a rusty metal surface) he offered his sword, his life, his honor—the honor of a soldier.

These things William accepted, and Churchill was free to meet other celebrities in one of the strangest military camps of history. The second in command, Count Schomberg, German by birth but a gentleman of the world by preference,

conceded to be the best soldier in Europe now that Turenne and Condé were dead, greeted him unpleasantly.

"You are the first deserter of the rank of lieutenant general I've ever met," said Schomberg.

He had an hour of dubious glory. William knew, Schomberg knew, everybody who was anybody knew, that this recruit was the most important the invading army could possibly gain. Old friends and new friends crowded around him, congratulating him, asking him questions. There had been gossip that Churchill and the Duke of Grafton had plotted to kidnap King James and bring him to William. They had talked him into starting for a visit to an outpost near the Dutch camp—a post commanded by Trelawney, who, it was later proved, was in league with Churchill. An attack of bleeding from the nose (which James later ascribed to the personal intervention of God) forced a last-minute cancellation of the trip. Was it true, they asked Churchill in William's camp, that he had planned to kidnap his King? He replied: "I would be the most ungrateful of mortals if I was to do anything to the injury of my gracious master." He was always lofty about that sort of thing: not even in private conversation, probably not even in his own thoughts, would he admit that he was a traitor and a hypocrite.

He had his hour of glory, the hour when he was the most important person in the kingdom; and then, abruptly, he was lost in a bewildering succession of events. His womanly voice is not heard now for some weeks, his bland smiling face does not appear in any of the scenes which follow immediately.

The kidnapping story, though James himself believed it, is certainly false. Not only is there no evidence to support it,

but it is apparent to the most casual student that a prisoner like James would only have been an embarrassment to William.

William was in a most peculiar position. For many months he had been definitely preparing for this invasion, had been the center of a plot without parallel for sheer cleverness and brilliance of detail. He had gathered a large army—Englishmen, Scots, Swedes, Swiss, Dutch, Germans, Danes—and all the supplies needed for that army, including forty brass cannon. He had obtained appropriations from the States General in spite of King Louis's threats and bribes. He had fitted out a great fleet. All this he had managed to do in secrecy. It had been a stupendous task. But the hardest part of the task, and the most delicate part, was just ahead. William must lead this army against a man who although not beloved of his countrymen was indisputably their legitimate King; he must lead it through a country whose folk, hating foreigners, were traditionally conservative and opposed to all change; and he must avoid friction and resentment or he was lost. His men were well disciplined and behaved perfectly. There were no outrages. Some few skirmishes were inevitable; but William cunningly used all the Englishmen in his army on outpost duty, while James, with characteristic short-sightedness, used his pet Irishmen; so that whatever skirmishes did occur were between Englishmen and aliens, though the Englishmen, paradoxically, were invaders, while the aliens were home troops.

But what was William going to do? Here he was with all his men, and King James was retreating before him. A single false step would mean ruin. What was his purpose? How was he going to act?

William did the best thing he could possibly have done:

under the circumstances—he kept his mouth shut and permitted James to make a fool of himself.

The rest of Europe had been carefully considered. In England, William was regarded as a Protestant champion—*the* Protestant Champion. Yet he never lost sight of his alliance against France, in which he wanted, among others, Catholic Austria and the Vatican itself. How could he justify this invasion to them? The thing seemed impossible. But he had done it, and was still doing it. King Louis was squabbling over a point of etiquette with the Pope; and William had convinced the Vatican and Vienna that Catholic France was in fact more dangerous to the peace of Europe than Protestant England. At the same time he had managed to convince Sweden, Denmark, and the German states, all Protestant, that this invasion was necessary to preserve their religion in Europe. William was a clever man.

He was now the center of a babbling crowd of cranks and partisan fanatics. There were some who wanted him to march on London without delay and overthrow James. There were some who wanted him to sit upon the throne himself, others who wanted him to force concessions from James and then retire, still others who wanted him to set up another commonwealth or republic, or at least a regency. All the dissatisfied elements flocked to him, and every new recruit had a different idea of what should be done. William listened to them all, coughed, and said nothing.

Macaulay felt rather sorry for him at this time. "Perhaps," writes Macaulay, "perhaps he thought at that moment how much reproach his enterprise, just, beneficent, and necessary as it was, must bring on him and on the wife who was devoted to him. Perhaps he repined at the hard fate which

had placed him in such a situation that he could fulfill his public duties only by breaking through domestic ties, and envied the happier condition of those who are not responsible for the welfare of nations and churches." Well, perhaps.

In London, James called a council of what important personages were left to him, and asked their opinions. The wisest advised him to make many concessions promptly, and they stressed the need, first of all, of granting an unqualified pardon to all those who had taken arms against him. Unless he did this, they explained, those who had already joined the Prince of Orange would not dare to return to James's fold, and the Prince himself would not dare leave them in the lurch.

Complete amnesty? No. "I cannot do it," James cried. "I must make examples—Churchill above all. Churchill has done this!" The personages were respectfully silent. James muttered incoherently for a few moments, then broke out again: "He and he alone has done this! He has corrupted my army! He has corrupted my child! He would have put me into the hands of the Prince of Orange but for God's special providence." James meant, of course, that nose-bleed. "My lords," he said suspiciously, "you are singularly anxious about the fate of traitors. But does none of you consider the fate of your King?"

Yet he agreed to some of the compromises they suggested. He gave back to the City of London its charter and returned their franchises to municipal corporations all over the kingdom. He prepared to call a free Parliament. He dispatched Halifax, Godolphin, and Nottingham as ambassadors to treat with William. His wife and infant son he sent out of the country; they departed by night, secretly, for France.

Halifax, Nottingham, and Godolphin returned with this set of proposals: William would agree not to come nearer than forty miles from London if James would agree to go forty miles the other side of the capital with his entire army. The Tower of London and Fort Tilbury, which would be left in the neutral zone, would then be temporarily entrusted to the City of London. James might attend sessions of the Parliament, provided William also was permitted to attend these sessions with a bodyguard of exactly the same number of men. Both armies must be paid by the nation at large.

Again William had brought himself brilliantly out of a tight situation. When James offered to call a free Parliament, William for the moment seemed checkmated, since it was for the calling of a free Parliament that he had, ostensibly, come over in the first place. That Parliament might make demands which the King might grant, satisfying all but a negligible minority of fanatics; and then where would William be? For the time being the Dutchman had the upper hand, as every one admitted: therefore, to the nation at large the armistice he proposed must have seemed fair to a fault. But William knew that James would reject the proposals as inconsistent with his dignity. After all, James was King of this nation. Why should he consent to back away a given distance and permit other persons to decide what to do about him? To James, William was an intruder, with whom he would no more treat than an ordinary citizen would treat with a burglar who has entered his bedroom. With a pistol pointed at him, the ordinary citizen might reconsider. But not a Stuart.

James rejected William's proposal. William stepped a little nearer to London. James lost his head, stole out of his palace

by night, dumped the Great Seal into the Thames, and made a break for France.

Poor London! It had suffered under many tyrants, and had basked in the benevolence of many good rulers, but now, abruptly, it found itself with no commander at all, and with no means of governing itself. The Archbishop of Canterbury and the few remaining great nobles formed themselves into an executive council. There was no precedent for this; they had no authority behind them. They merely hoped that the weight of their names would keep the people in peace until a proper chief appeared. Otherwise, London at least would be in a state of anarchy.

They did their best, but they were not able to check the cutthroats, the purse-snatchers, the plunderers, who now roamed the city at will. James, before going, had commanded Feversham to disband the army; and thousands of soldiers, without money or prospects of employment, were suddenly turned loose upon the city. James could always be depended upon to do the worst thing possible.

The residences of Roman Catholics and of foreign ambassadors were invaded and the furnishings torn to pieces. Bonfires were blazing everywhere. Nobody was safe. Yet, oddly enough, nobody was killed. One man, to be sure, escaped by a narrow margin. That man was George Jeffreys, who since the Bloody Assizes had added to his unpopularity by acting as head of James's own ecclesiastical commission, a body generally deemed illegal and abhorred by almost everybody in the kingdom. Jeffreys was captured by chance and roughly handled. The mob would have torn him to pieces had not the remnants of James's army pulled him out of the mêlée and hailed him before the Lord Mayor, where he grovelled,

weeping. His eyebrows had been shaved off; he was in rags, grimy, greasy, hysterical with fright, bruised and bleeding, trembling like a victim of nightmare. The poor old Lord Mayor took one look at him and threw a fit—a succession of fits, from which he never recovered; he died soon afterwards. They took Jeffreys to the Tower, where, still wealthy, he drank himself to death.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

Buttered Side Up

MEANWHILE, William was on his way to the capital. In all fairness to him, it must be admitted that now his presence was really needed there.

Until this time everything had gone as he wished, but at Windsor he was halted by an unexpected blow. Foolish, frightened James was still in the country! He had boarded a hoy off Emley Ferry, near Sheerness; but as he had been about to sail the vessel was boarded by fifty or sixty fishermen—ruffians unwilling to lose a chance for plunder. James was in disguise. They had laid violent hands upon him, pulling him this way and that. They had stolen his watch, his rings, the diamond buckles from his shoes. They had dragged him into one of the small boats; and even when they had learned that he was the King, they had thrown him into prison.

He seems to have lost his mind. He could not even talk coherently, but babbled like a lunatic. He was a Stuart. A *Stuart!* And common fishermen, filthy fellows, had mauled him. He never recovered from that experience. Before you laugh at him, remember the centuries of breeding that had gone into his make-up; remember his dignity, the awe with which he contemplated himself, as if he were in truth not merely a mortal man but a part of the godhead.

Feversham and some others, who came to his rescue as

soon as the news reached London, found him blubbering and moaning. They took him back to the capital. It was a foggy night, with a fine drizzle of rain. James gazed blankly from a window and saw the matches of Dutch muskets gleam through the mist. He was a prisoner.

But a man who had been such a fool once would be such a fool again: so William reasoned. And those Dutchmen were guarding Whitehall only for the sake of appearance. In fact, James was given every opportunity to do what William wanted him to do—escape again.

And in a little while James did so. This time nobody tried to stop him. He went to France, where he rejoined his wife and son, and where King Louis greeted them with true magnificence, giving them a palace, servants, state dinners, much cash, and promises of an army and navy for the winning back of their kingdoms. When James crossed the throne room to take his place on the right hand of the King of France, a Cardinal whispered: "There goes the man who threw away three kingdoms for an old mass."

Ireland was held by Tyrconnell for his exiled master. Scotland was in a turmoil, not knowing which way to turn. And England, after having had one king, then two, then none, then two again, now found itself with a Dutchman and no Great Seal. It was a most awkward position. Nothing like it had ever happened before, at least not to England; and the personages of the court, desperately eager to do the right thing, were benighted in puzzlement. They appealed to William, but William kept his mouth shut. It was their country. A Parliament had been summoned: let that Parliament do what it pleased.

Still, William was there. And so was his army.

Parliament met. All sorts of proposals swirled through the corridors like eddies of air—swelled suddenly to cyclonic proportions, howling, whistling fiercely—then subsided, reduced again to humble, aimless wandering. Another Commonwealth? Too many were against it, for the previous experiment had been anything but successful. Call back James with certain understandings? James probably would not agree to anything; and there was always Prince William to consider. Put Mary on the throne? That seemed reasonable. Rule by a board of regency during the lifetime of James? But such boards were notoriously clumsy, and besides, who would be qualified to name the members?

The politicians had a real task on their hands. They began to wish for some sort of king—at least, for somebody whom they could infuriate with the bills they passed. But William said nothing. He made no promises, gave no hint of his own feelings. Coloring all their debates, a shadow in the background which might yet devour them all, he remained speechless, expressionless, waiting for them to act.

The suggestion of a regency gained some supporters. There were those who wanted to send for the baby Prince of Wales and have him brought up in the Church of England, so that he could rule the nation when he came of age. But would James consent to have his only son brought up in the Anglican faith? Probably not.

More popular was the proposal that Mary be declared Queen Regent, with William a sort of honored guest. This idea was gaining headway when William abruptly uttered a few croaks. He was unwilling to be any manner of Prince Consort, with or without that title; nor had he assembled an army and brought it over to this island just for his own

amusement. After this he wrapped silence around him again; nor were his few trusted confidants, to whom he occasionally whispered in Dutch, any more communicative than he.

Parliament sighed and went back to its arguments. *Something* must be done: that was obvious. For here were Prince William and Prince William's army. If he became angry and went home, leaving the field clear for James's return, then these politicians would go straight to the gallows. They knew that. William knew it also. They were completely in his power; and he kept his mouth shut, waiting, certain that sooner or later they would think of the thing he wanted.

And in due time they did think of it. And still gasping a bit at their own originality, they asked the eagle if he would care to become King of England and Ireland? Something that was almost a smile flickered across that dour, sour countenance. William accepted the invitation.

Soon afterwards, and without any trouble, a similar invitation came from Scotland; and this, too, William accepted.

My Lord Churchill did not vote. Yet it was he, as much as any man, who put William upon the throne. The resolution declaring that throne vacant on the theory that James had abdicated, was passed by a majority of two votes in the House of Lords—and Churchill and a few of his personal friends were conspicuously absent, pleading illness. Even now he was preparing against future emergencies, keeping doors open. No man could point to any record and show in black and white that John Churchill, Baron of Churchill, had voted against his King, just as no man could show that Prince William had at any time done anything to threaten or intimidate his father-in-law or had made any move toward the throne until formally requested to do so by the assembled estates of

the realm. A delicate business had been nicely brought off; and the principals, landing buttered side up, were willing enough to lapse into comparative obscurity for a little while.

Not that Lord Churchill was idle. He was, indeed, one of the busiest men in the kingdom. William commanded him to reorganize the army—a tremendous task, but lucrative. He began to get rich. Commissions were sold as usual, and Jack Churchill got a good share of each price paid. This was not graft, but an accepted practice. He had struck a bargain with William, and he was going to grab everything he could grab. The new king had no more valuable servant (though he had many whom he liked better) than Jack Churchill. It was Churchill who had managed Anne's consent to the arrangement for the succession—a consent which the Princess was at first loath to give. Probably William would have been made King even if Anne had opposed it, but his position would have been weaker, and the possibility of James's restoration would have been much greater, if Anne had sulked about the "abdication" definition.

Mary came over from The Hague. Rather stout, still handsome, but with hard eyes, she was very different from the girl who had gone away with William after that curious marriage in St. James's palace eleven years earlier. The night she arrived there were many bonfires and many windowed candles; the populace burned in effigy the Pope, James the Second, and even the poor baby Prince of Wales. Mary was very happy. She was a Queen now, and her husband was a King, and they had a beautiful new home with beautiful new furnishings and linens and silverware. All these things were her father's personal property, but Mary did not worry

on that score; she ran from room to room in Whitehall, emitting little screams of delight as she examined them.

The work of reorganizing the army completed, William elevated Jack Churchill to an earldom. A distant connection, no blood relative, had been the Earl of Marlborough; the title had become extinct in 1679, and Churchill picked it for himself. Thereafter he was to be known by the name of Marlborough. He was to flaunt it thrillingly across Europe, put it into the mouths of persons who could not pronounce another English word, establish it as one of the very great names of all time. The Earl of Marlborough. The motto Sir Winston Churchill had adopted, "*Fiel pero Desdichado*"—faithful but unfortunate—his son might appropriately have reversed, for his unfaithfulness was bringing him positions which made him, in appearance at least, one of the most fortunate men in the kingdom.

Two days after this, William and Mary were crowned King and Queen of England, Scotland, and Ireland. While they were dressing for the ceremony they were informed that James had landed in Ireland with 5,000 Frenchmen and was rallying the 40,000 soldiers whom Tyrconnell had held in arms for the recovery of the kingdoms. William and Mary went on dressing.

These three crowns meant little to William except as weapons against France. He was not personally very ambitious. But he was a hater without comparison in history; and no sooner had he taken over his new powers than he set to work preparing for war against Louis the Fourteenth. His own nation, the United Provinces, was already at war with Louis; now William wanted England and Scotland for allies. Some flimsy pretexts were scraped together. French ships in

the Channel had not been lowering their flags to English ships in accordance with the ancient rights of said English ships. French fishermen were poaching along the English-owned coast of Newfoundland. The French King had insulted the English and Scottish nations by recognizing an exile as their proper monarch. So there must be war.

This decision did not please the English people, who, to be sure, disliked France, but who were not eager to have further conflicts thrust upon them. King James, at least, had kept the nation in peace; and he and his brother had performed wonders in stabilizing the finances of the nation, which the Cromwellian government had all but ruined. James, too, had always been a hard worker who gloried in the fact that he was an Englishman; but William seemed to have no business with England except to force her to disgorge armies for his own fights on the Continent. James had kept the nation out of debt; William was putting it deeply into debt. In fine, James had not been so bad, after all. But William was King now.

William had hoped to take over Ireland quietly, but a traitor had changed his expectations; and now the Stuart was in possession of that kingdom. Scotland, too, had seemed prepared to come into the fold like a good little lamb. But one Graham of Claverhouse, a peppery little fellow adoringly called "Bonnie Dundee;" was leading a handful of kilted Highlanders back and forth in brilliant guerrilla warfare, chipping great chunks from the regular army opposed to him and keeping the whole nation in an agony of suspense and terror.

In spite of all this, William sent a large English contingent to the Continent to fight against the French. A comparatively

small force was sent against the exacerbating Claverhouse. And Marshal Schomberg was dispatched to Ireland with 10,000 troops and instructions to drive James out.

Schomberg, old and gouty, trying to manage raw troops as if they were veterans, and disgusted with the unconventional fighting methods of the Irish—which he seemed to consider, somehow, not altogether fair—failed miserably.

"Bonnie Dundee" led the bewildered regulars into an ambush at Killiecrankie and won a spectacular victory. But he lost his own life in the fray, and his uprising died for lack of inspiration. Thus, Scotland was safe again; but by accident; the glory was not William's.

On the Continent the English cause prospered unexpectedly. The commander-in-chief, the Prince of Waldeck, then sixty-nine years old, was attacked by the French at Walcourt. Things looked bad; only a counter-attack would save the day. Smiling Jack Churchill went riding in at the head of his men, and the French were driven back in confusion and with great losses. It may be significant, or it may be no more than a coincidence, but it is worth noting that the battle of Walcourt was the last, as it had been the first, in which the Prince of Waldeck was victor; and Waldeck himself confessed that most of the credit belonged to the second in command. Once more Jack Churchill went back to England a hero.

But a quite different sort of hero from the guardsman who had helped to storm the half-moon before Maestricht. That guardsman had been young and gallant, a swaggering, swanking fellow. Now he was middle-aged, a scheming politician, trusted by no one. Then he had been Barbara Palmer's lover. Now he was Sarah Jennings's husband.

It would be fascinating, if it did not happen to be impossible, to contemplate him as he would have been without Sarah. The man was indisputably a genius in every respect but one. He was not weak or slow, nor did he lack originality. But he had no *restlessness*. There was not, inside of him, that spark which fires the whole frame into a furious desire to do stupendous things all the time. He had not found his own world an ignoble one, and never had he felt a terrible craving to beat his way out of it and into the vastness of unimaginable space. He was not lazy. He worked rapidly and relentlessly at every job he undertook, and he never quit until that job was finished. Not only had he never failed to accomplish whatever he started, but he had never failed to do it better than his predecessors. He was even the best traitor of his time.

But the very essence of genius was missing from his make-up. He was an astounding piece of mechanism. The electrical connections were there, but the current was lacking. And how he had happened to fall in love with Sarah Jennings is a matter which may well set any man pondering upon the ways of God and kindred subjects. For Sarah supplied him with that restlessness, that insatiable nervous energy, which was the one thing he needed to make him a supremely great person. Sarah was the electrical current. Most of the gifts she brought him for dowry were unfortunate—her uncontrollable temper, her merciless sarcasm, her passion for court intrigue, her wit without humor, her brilliant inconsistency. Though she was penetrating, she was not understanding. She had brains but did not know how to use them. Alone, she would have been no more than a beautiful but disagreeable woman. Even her grip upon Princess Anne, which had carried her husband far and was to carry him still farther, was

accidental, inexplicable, a result of Anne's peculiar form of stupidity.

Sarah was nothing but a spark. But single sparks have destroyed oak forests. And Jack Churchill, as he rode back to London after that season's campaign, must have wondered much about the conflagration in the midst of which he found himself.

CHAPTER TWELVE

Exploits in the Field

UNENTHUSIASTIC William received him with what for William was positive warmth. The war against France was nearest to the new King's heart, and Walcourt was the only real victory his arms had ever gained.

But although he respected the Earl of Marlborough more than ever as a soldier, he did not trust him. Indeed, he did not trust any Englishman. Nor can he be blamed. For a new spirit ruled England now. Under the Tudors and the Stuarts, though there were the customary peculations, loyalty was the moving spirit of the people; under William it was avarice. William had no claim to the affection of this nation, nor did he make any pretense of liking the place. Traitors had put him on the throne, and traitors were keeping him there. He was a necessity, nothing more. They were prepared to use him mercilessly in their search for wealth, nor was he in any position to prevent them from doing so. For he could not have England without paying Englishmen—paying not the people themselves, but the members of that comparatively small group of powerful nobles who had helped him engineer what history, apparently without a smile, has decided to call the Glorious Revolution of 1688.

Impatient to get back to the work of humbling, or trying to humble, France, William was faced with the annoying

necessity of first stabilizing his new kingdoms. Ireland still thrust out her jaw at him, sneering; and since Schomberg, old and peevish, seemed unable to do anything to better affairs, William decided to go there himself.

He appointed a regency council of nine nobles, one of them the Earl of Marlborough, to help Queen Mary govern the nation in his absence. He called these gentlemen together and begged them to do everything possible to coöperate with the Queen, who in matters of government was without experience, besides being not over-endowed with brains in the first place. Then he warned Mary to trust none of these fellows and to act only in an emergency, holding up ordinary matters for his own approval. She probably would have adopted this course even if he had not given her instructions to do so; for she echoed her husband in everything, and since he was doubtful of the honesty of Englishmen, so was she, who had once been so patriotic.

Gallantly, then, the nine nobles ran the nation while Mary wrote to her spouse and took long walks in an effort to keep down her weight. Every night she went to bed at half past ten, as she and William had always done.[1] "I ever fear not doing well, and trust to what nobody says but you," Mary wrote, appending numerous expressions of love.

The nine noblemen, and others like them, were making

[1] William was no prude, but like Churchill he was too busy to bother with heavy drinking, late hours, and gambling. For many years his hour of retiring had been half-past ten. When as a young man, long before his marriage to Mary was even thought of, he had visited England, the peacocks of Charles the Second's court had been vastly amused. One night they managed to get him drunk on champagne, and wished they hadn't, for he raged through Whitehall, shrieking and breaking everything breakable; it took half a dozen men to hold him down. William, however, was fond of gin; and on some nights he used to sit up with Dutch favorites, exchanging stories and experiences. Englishmen were never allowed at these gatherings.

money. The navy, which King James had kept shipshape, was picked to pieces by contract robbers: the men-of-war were rotten, the sailors badly fed and irregularly paid, the equipment inadequate and unseaworthy. The gentlemen of the admiralty office bought themselves grand mansions and bedecked their wives in diamonds and rubies; and presently —even though the admiral, Torrington, protested—they ordered an attack upon the French fleet. The English and Dutch, combined, took an unmerciful drubbing off Beachy Head. The gentlemen of the admiralty were indignant, for England should never be defeated, particularly at sea. Arrangements were made to try Torrington. Queen Mary asked the Earl of Marlborough to be a member of the court-martial, but he declined on the ground that he knew little about maritime affairs. In fact, though not a sailor, he was well versed in naval matters and was expert in "amphibious warfare"—attacking coastal cities by land and sea simultaneously. But he probably knew the condition of the fleet and the reasons why Torrington had not wanted to fight, and he was not eager to sit in judgment upon an admiral so patently innocent. Torrington was eventually tried and acquitted.

The Earl of Marlborough himself was commander-in-chief of the military forces left in England, such as they were. The army was in better condition than the navy; yet an appalling number of regiments never got beyond paper. Gentlemen who could not be refused were given commissions to raise regiments. This they rarely did, but they drew the pay. Schomberg, in a letter written to William from Ireland, complains of one fellow whose "regiment" never got farther than a single flag which he kept in a corner of his

bedroom, though this "colonel" took pay for several hundred soldiers each month. And there were many who did not even have the manliness and self-respect to buy flags.

Cromwell and his wars had put the country into bad financial condition. The Stuart brothers had worked earnestly to better this and had lightened considerably the burden of taxation. But now William was obliged to borrow money to keep the ship of state afloat. Taxes went up and the national debt began. One of the chief objections to James—at least, one of the chief arguments the politicians had used against him—was that he had tried to build a large standing army. But James had wanted this army for defense only; he had kept the nation at peace. William, who promptly set about raising an even larger army, wanted it for his own quarrels with France.

But England had committed herself, and for the time, it seemed, there was nothing else she could do.

William, with a large force of veterans, met James, with a smaller force composed chiefly of green Irish troops, at the Boyne water, and the fight, itself no great affair and reflecting no particular credit upon either commander, was a definite turning-point in the war in Ireland. James fled back to France. But William still had plenty of work on hand where he was, so the nine noblemen in London continued to rule England in the name of Mary.

There had been talk of giving Churchill a command under William in Ireland, for he was just as eager for action as he had been when as an ensign in the Duke of York's foot guards he had asked to be sent to Tangier. But while James himself was in the field, my Lord Marlborough preferred to remain at home. He wanted to keep a back door open all the time.

Painted by Kneller. Engraved by Woolnoth

Sarah Duchess of Marlborough.

Grown crafty, he wanted to keep his own record technically clear. However, now that James was back in France there was no reason why Churchill should not indulge himself in a little fighting. It was a nice point.

William and his men were still busy reducing fortresses and quieting the peasantry in the middle of Ireland, and the south coast was open and in the hands of adherents of James. Turenne's protégé perceived that it was important to close the southern ports to the French, in order to prevent the landing of more of King Louis's soldiers who might stir up rebellion anew. He proposed, in council, to lead an expedition against Cork and Kinsale, the only places where a French invading force could land.

The proposal was not well received. Admiral Russell approved it heartily, and so did Nottingham, but the others were unanimously against it. The defeat of the English and Dutch fleets off Beachy Head, they pointed out, had given the French control of the Channel and had left England open to direct invasion from France; and they considered it the height of rashness, at such a time, to take a large body of troops from the country. Marlborough answered that he needed only six thousand men; he reminded them that King Louis had obviously been surprised by his own naval victory and had not been prepared to launch an invasion against England herself—which, however, was a quite different affair from an invasion of Ireland. The month was August; the members of the council argued that Cork and Kinsale could not possibly be stormed and taken before the coming of Winter, which would be so severe in that part of Ireland as to paralyze military activity. Marlborough answered that he

was ready to stake his reputation as a soldier that he could take both places before Winter came.

Still they would have rejected his proposal but for Queen Mary, who, not understanding it at all, insisted that it be forwarded to her husband. This was done; and William wrote back commanding that the plan be carried into effect at once.

Now, at last, Jack Churchill was to get his opportunity to lead an independent command; he was to be given free rein. With everything to lose and little to gain, he was willing, even eager, to undertake this petty but dangerous job. In order to gain any glory at all, he must accomplish all he had promised. If he failed to do so, his reputation would suffer greatly, perhaps irreparably. Yet he had no hesitation about the business. His confidence in himself was complete, and he set to work with alacrity, preparing the fleet and the six regiments.

While this work was going on, Sarah bore him a second son, Charles Churchill, who, however, died two years later.

By early September Churchill was ready to sail. Bad weather and contrary winds delayed the start for more than two weeks. Every day was precious. The voyage was a rough one, and the commander was very seasick all the way. He entered the harbor of Cork on Saturday evening, September 20, 1690, and at once set about making preparations for the siege.

He had been promised four thousand soldiers as reënforcements from William's army in the field. This army, technically English, actually included Danes, Dutch, and troops of many other nationalities, and was commanded by Dutchmen who were jealous of the English general. William had sailed for England, leaving in charge Baron van Ginkel, a charming

man but not a great general. To van Ginkel Churchill wrote, asking to have the promised reënforcements put under Sir John Lanier and Percy Kirke, old comrades of his. But van Ginkel did not want all the glory of this expedition to go to Englishmen. After reading Churchill's letter, he deliberately dispatched Lanier and Kirke north, and then wrote regretting that they were not available and that he was sending instead the Duke of Würtemberg. There was not a single Englishman among the four thousand infantry under Würtemberg.

Details of the siege of Cork would be tedious for a layman. The city never had a chance against the invader. Its defenses, naturally strong, were antiquated. The garrison was about equal in number to Marlborough's men without the reënforcements; and its only chance lay in getting relief before Würtemberg appeared, or in managing to hold out long enough for the arrival of Winter to put an end to the siege.

Jack Churchill called upon the governor, Colonel Macgillicuddy, to surrender. For answer Macgillicuddy ran up a red flag, and Jack Churchill began his siege. He was doing his work quickly, thoroughly, and efficiently, when he found himself confronted by a young man who demanded that the command of the whole force be turned over to him without delay.

His Serene Highness Ferdinand William, Duke of Würtemberg, explained condescendingly to Churchill that, whereas the Englishman was a nobody, *he* was of royal blood. Therefore, His Serene Highness pointed out, *he* must command. It was perfectly simple.

Now Jack Churchill had in his pocket a commission of command signed by Queen Mary, but royal dukes are not

easy persons to handle. If Churchill appealed to van Ginkel, that Dutchman would probably side with Ferdinand. If he appealed to William in England, considerable time would be lost, and time was an important factor in the siege. He had staked his military reputation on the success of this enterprise, and if for whatever reason, he failed, he would probably never get another independent command. More than that, probably no Englishman would get such a command; for the new King would argue that if the man admitted to be the best soldier in the three kingdoms was not capable of reducing a couple of petty fortresses, then what Englishman was?

Jack Churchill spoke smoothly, quietly, to the Duke of Würtemberg. He said all sorts of flattering things. But the Duke was not to be moved. He wanted the command. He must be given the command. Otherwise he would not fight, nor would he permit his men to fight.

Churchill must have undergone a sore temptation to punch this impertinent youngster in the nose. But he only talked. And when all other arguments, and all flattery, had failed, at last he suggested a dangerous compromise: they should share the command, each taking it on alternate days. To this His Serene Highness graciously consented.

As commander for the first day (presumably they tossed a coin) Churchill gave orders that the countersign for that day would be "Würtemberg." His Serene Highness was delighted by this graceful compliment; and the following day, when the Duke commanded, the countersign was "Marlborough." Everybody was happy again.

It is an excellent example of the way Jack Churchill got things done. Any other general would have held up the siege

while he proved his right to command, as Churchill knew he could do; or else, consenting to the alternate-day compromise, he would have sulked, opposed the other general, trying to grab all the glory for himself. The Duke of Würtemberg, made happy by smooth talk, soon came to realize that he was in the company of a real general, and instead of trying to interfere further with Churchill's designs, he coöperated in everything, adopting all Churchill's suggestions, so that Cork soon fell.

Winter was coming fast. The men were hurried across to Kinsale and opened operations for their second siege. Kinsale had no more chance of prolonged resistance than Cork, but an effort was made to keep the English outside the city until cold weather drove them from the land entirely. This was not successful. Kinsale fell as rapidly as Cork had fallen. And the Earl of Marlborough returned to London to meet and smile blandly upon those gentlemen who had been primed to shout "I told you so."

William admitted that Churchill had done extraordinarily well, considering his experience. The remark is characteristic of William. The new King had been actively engaged in some sort of war all his life; whereas Churchill, though he had managed to get into every fight open to Englishmen, had passed through long periods of peace-time soldiering. Therefore William was a better general. At least so William reasoned. The truth was that William might have lived ten times as long, and been at war always, without ever becoming half as good a general as Jack Churchill. The new King, though he loved war and knew everything about it that textbooks and contemporary commanders could teach him, was simply not a born military genius—and Churchill was. The battle

of the Boyne was William's only personal success, and it would have required a very poor general indeed to lose that field.

The newly created Earl of Marlborough represented, in his person, the home soldiers; he was England's prize military pupil, the man whom England was proudest of as a general. And English jealousy of the Dutch, perfectly natural in the circumstances, was heightened by William's appointments of Dutchmen to all important army posts. Nor was this activity of William's confined to military affairs. William knew his own countrymen and trusted them, and he loaded them with titles, pensions, and high commands. Generals, commissioners, earls, even dukes, who could speak scarcely a word of English, were growing wealthy on English money. To be sure, Englishmen were getting money, too; but they wanted it all, and wanted all the honors besides. Their attitude was that the new King must not be allowed to rule with too free a hand, since it was to relieve the country from despotism that he had been created King in the first place. William's attitude was that these English had begged him to accept the throne, and now that he had it he was going to do as he pleased with it.

Churchill was a member of the anti-crown group. In fact, he was the spokesman and quite possibly the leader, of that group. He was a prominent figure in the first skirmish with the King. Parliament granted William £600,000 a year. Princess Anne wanted to have £30,000 of this. Her father had allowed her that sum; so why shouldn't William? But William did not want her to be independent of him. Politically generous, he was personally stingy.

Sarah called this outrageous. She told Anne what to do—and offered the services of her husband. Soon Jack Churchill

was bringing before the House of Lords a proposal to petition the King to allow the Princess £70,000 a year—the intimation being that if he did not do so, he would not have £600,000 next year. The petition was taken as a test case; and every disappointed office-seeker, every patriot annoyed at the sight of Dutchmen in high positions, every Jacobite who wanted to see the new King embarrassed, rallied around Churchill. William, furious, compromised by granting Anne £50,000 a year. He would have saved himself money if he had been less niggardly in the first place.

The business did not increase William's love for the Earl of Marlborough. Moreover, the wives of these two men had become bitter foes. Mary forgot the warm assurances of friendship she had written to Sarah before becoming Queen of England, Scotland, and Ireland. It was natural that she should take her husband's side in every argument, and she knew that the power behind her sister was Jack Churchill's arrogant wife. She was jealous of Sarah. She was furious with Anne.

William, too, disliked women meddling in public affairs. A descent upon Dunkirk was planned; but the French, in spite of elaborate attempts to keep it secret, learned of it and fortified the place against it. Only William, the Duke of Shrewsbury, Lord Nottingham, and the Earl of Marlborough had known that secret, and William believed that Sarah Churchill had written it to her sister Frances, who had passed it on to her husband, who had handed it to James, who had given it to Louis the Fourteenth. William called Churchill before him and informed him that the secret was out.

"Upon my honor, Your Majesty, I told nobody but my wife!"

"I did not tell mine," said William.

Turbulent Sarah was also at war with Elizabeth Villiers, William's favorite mistress. Queen Mary was engaged in a petty feud with the Dowager Queen, Catharine of Braganza, who had retired to the country. The whole court, indeed, was a whirl of small spite and recrimination. Hundreds, thousands, were openly expressing the wish that James would be called back. Englishmen, humanly sensitive, knew that men of other nations were laughing at a people who had surrendered to the Dutch without firing a shot; Englishmen knew that this was not putting it fairly, yet they also realized that they need expect no other interpretation of the Revolution as long as William had his way as King.

Ireland had been conquered, yes; but she was not dead; she kept up a low muttering of threats. Irishmen were pouring into France, enlisting under King Louis, so that they would have an opportunity to fight William. Scots were doing the same. Scotland was a hotbed of Jacobitism: Highlands and Lowlands alike resented William's treatment of Scotland as a conquered nation.

Yet in spite of all this the little Dutchman took all the soldiers he could spare when he went back to the Continent that Spring.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

Experiments in Falsehood

MY LORD OF MARLBOROUGH did not fear death, but he did fear poverty. James might yet be restored, and if this happened Churchill would probably go to the gallows; certainly, at least, all his worldly goods would be confiscated. The thought of this latter punishment was more than he could bear.

It might still be well to have the back door open. You never knew, these days, *who* was going to be the next King of England.

One afternoon Churchill and his friend Godolphin, the Lord Treasurer, while walking in Hyde Park encountered Lord Buckley, one of James's agents. There were the customary bows, and Buckley invited the pair to dine with him. Though they knew what this meant, they accepted.

Buckley called in Colonel Sackville, another Jacobite spy, and soon the two were listening with delight while my Lord of Marlborough told them how very much he wanted to do something for the restoration of James. What Godolphin said is not of record; he was a timid little fellow, and in matters like this he followed his friend with large-eyed misgivings. But Jack Churchill cried that he could not eat, he could not drink, he could not sleep nights, so much did he worry about the disgraceful manner in which he had treated the true King. He said he did not aspire to regain

James's confidence, for of that he was now unworthy; but he did hope to be able, some time, to do something, anything, toward putting James back on the throne.

Buckley and Sackville reported this by special messenger to James, who didn't believe it. Words were cheap and Churchill always had been a good talker. But would he show some proof of this great devotion to his proper monarch?

Certainly! Did they want military and naval plans? Churchill had them ready. Did they desire news of what happened at each meeting of the Privy Council? He would supply it regularly. The royal exile, checked the information with that which he had already received from other distinguished traitors, and found it to be correct. "Their seeming repentance, especially that of Churchill, had all the appearance of sincerity," James admitted in his autobiography.

Churchill himself wrote to his old master, begging that he be used in some manner—any manner—in the work of a restoration. He was ready to leave home, family, fortune (he wrote) at the command of James. He promised to have Sarah argue Princess Anne back into loyalty to her father. He promised to do everything he could to win over army leaders. He even suggested an invasion of England by the French, recommending, however, that only about twenty thousand Frenchmen be used, as a larger force might arouse the suspicions of the English people! He was most humble, most obsequious.

James answered the letter in his own hand, Marie-Beatrice adding a few gracious words in postscript. And a regular correspondence was begun.

Small wonder that William mistrusted Englishmen! The very men who had brought him over from The Hague were

now plotting with his enemy in exile. He was surrounded by spies, and he knew it. Churchill and Godolphin were not alone: James was holding similar correspondence with Lord Halifax, Lord Danby, the Duke of Newcastle, the Duke of Leeds, the Marquis of Normanby, the Earl of Sunderland, Lord Carmarthen, the Earl of Abington, Lord Rochester, Admiral Russell, the Earl of Bath—all men who had deserted him in his hour of need.

William didn't care much. He wanted to keep control of England in order to raise armies in that nation; for the rest, they could plot all they pleased. He had no interest in political matters which did not directly influence his military plans. He knew these men loathed him. He was haughty, aloof. The nickname "Caliban" clung to him still. It was difficult for even the highest nobles to get his private ear, and much more difficult for them to wring any satisfactory answer from him when they did get it. He treated them like house servants, knowing that they would be faithless to him even if he treated them well. Paying positions he gave to his Dutch friends; Dutch soldiers, upon whom William could rely, remained in England; while English soldiers were sent to the Continent.

When the new King crossed the Channel to lead his Continental army in person in the Spring of 1691 he took Churchill with him as a staff officer. But there was little excitement, and no glory, serving in a campaign under the Oranger. It has been said that Turenne, even with a small army, could wage war on a grand scale; and that even with a large army William never could rise above *la petite guerre*. Churchill favored a spirited offensive, but his advice was ignored; William permitted the enemy to do the pushing,

basing his own hope of success on the chance that the French commander would make a tactical error.

There was no change in William's attitude toward Churchill after their return to England. Churchill wanted the position of Master of Ordnance, vacant since Schomberg's death at the Boyne water; but William gave this to one of his favorites. Princess Anne requested her brother-in-law to bestow the Order of the Garter upon the Earl of Marlborough in recognition of his services at Cork and Kinsale; William refused.

Of course Sarah was furious. Sarah was always furious about something. Probably it was she who was chiefly responsible for the unaccustomed frankness with which Jack Churchill talked in these days. He baited the King with loudly voiced opinions of Dutch favorites, and once even had the audacity to tell William to his face that it was poor policy to keep foreign troops in England. He was acting as the megaphone for the dissatisfied nobles, and so vituperative did he become that William once confessed to the Prussian ambassador that if he were not a king he would feel called upon to challenge Churchill to a duel.

The Earl of Marlborough must have known he was riding for a fall. William would soon be obliged to make an example of one of these grumblers, and he, the loudest, would be the logical selection. Doubtless the complaints were calculated principally to impress the King Across the Water, still-hopeful James, who would regard them as another reason for believing that Churchill was truly repentant. In fact, the exile seems really to have begun to believe in Churchill's sincerity. A letter from Anne, obviously prompted by Sarah, strengthened this belief: the Princess begged her father's forgiveness.

Anne was the strongest weapon *Le Bel Anglais* possessed. Queen Mary was pestering her continually to dismiss Sarah Jennings Churchill, whom Mary hated and feared. Anne would not do so. Her rapturous boarding-school attachment to Sarah was more fervid than ever. She could refuse her *dear* Mrs. Freeman nothing, and even pressed many unasked-for gifts upon her. The Churchills married off their two daughters about this time—Henrietta, who was nineteen, to Francis, only son of Lord Godolphin, who was twenty and very much in love with his young wife; and Anne, her father's favorite, seventeen years old, to disagreeable young Lord Spencer, oldest son of the Earl of Sunderland. These were good matches, but the Churchills could have done much better had they waited a little longer.[1] Jack Churchill gave £5,000 dowry with each daughter, and to this Princess Anne added £5,000 more.

Anne was generous, and she was honestly fond of Sarah. The two sat at cards for many hours. The Princess usually lost, and she was in debt to Sarah for something between £1,500 and £1,600. That was a lot of money for a woman who had to run a royal household on £50,000 a year; and Anne was annoyed to learn that William, unlike her own father when King, would not settle her debts for her when she ran over her allowance.

The strain between the royal sisters, once close com-

[1] For example, it was at one time proposed, though perhaps not very seriously, that the son of James the Second, the "warming-pan baby," be married to one of the Churchill girls. This, it was argued, would firmly attach England's greatest soldier to the exiled house of Stuart. Again, later, it was proposed to marry a prince of the House of Guelph, then Electors of Hanover, to one of these girls, in order to secure the succession for that family. These proposals were, it may be, wild enough, but the fact that they were even rumored shows the importance of Churchill in the eyes of those who truly understood the English political situation.

panions and dear friends, was daily increasing. One night in January of 1692, they broke into an open quarrel. It was the old difference: Mary wanted Anne to dismiss Sarah Jennings Churchill from her household, and Anne refused to do so. Some very unroyal words were exchanged.

The next morning Churchill, in his capacity of Gentleman of the Bedchamber, handed William the Third a shirt; and when this duty was completed he retired to less exalted labors. He had observed nothing unusual in William's manner. But an hour later he was handed an order from the King to sell all his commissions and public offices.

There was no explanation; but there was no need for one. Churchill, who must have expected this, was not disturbed. It would make an added argument in his favor with exiled James; and powerful friends would probably have him back in office soon. He sold his colonelcy of the Royal Fusiliers, his colonelcy of the Life Guards, his seat in the Privy Council, and his privilege of handing William a shirt every morning.

Still Princess Anne refused to dismiss her favorite. It was generally believed at the time that Sarah was deliberately working the Princess for all she could get out of her—that Sarah was playing politics. But it appears that Anne did almost all the leading, being hopelessly infatuated. Anne could not conceive of a world without her *dear* Mrs. Freeman; she pressed favors upon her, repeatedly assuring her that she would always be a fond friend, and was even jealous because she thought Sarah was too much in the company of the dissolute Lady Sunderland.[2]

[2] She was the current mistress of Henry Sidney, the same gazelle-eyed dandy who had carried to William the seven politicians' invitation to invade England. Her husband, who had been converted to the Catholic faith to please James, had recently been converted back to the Protestant faith to please William. He was an amazing old rascal.

"Be assured, if you should ever do so cruel a thing as to leave me," Anne wrote to Sarah, "from that moment I shall never enjoy one quiet hour. And should you do it without asking my consent (which if I ever give you may I never see the face of Heaven) I will shut myself up and never see the world more, but live where I may be forgotten by human kind."

There were many, many more letters like this. Yet all the time Anne was being a good and faithful wife to the pudgy Prince of Denmark. She bore him a child a year regularly, though only one of these lived beyond infancy.

On May 4, 1692, Churchill was arrested on a warrant issued by the Privy Council and charging high treason. The following day he was thrown into the Tower of London.

Of course there is a story behind it. James had again persuaded King Louis to launch an invasion of England; French troops were concentrated at all seaport towns, ready to sail, and the fleet had assembled under De Tourville, the hero of Beachy Head. William, as usual, had most of his own forces on the Continent, and was leading them in person. To all appearances James was as good as back on the throne. The English fleet was not strong enough to meet the French fleet, and there would be no time to enlist Dutch naval assistance. William's unpopularity in England made it almost certain that as soon as James landed at the head of his French army, traitor after traitor would rally around him. There were many, as William had good reason to know, who were eager to be on the winning side at all costs. So William promptly ordered the arrest of certain men he thought were most likely

Sarah once called him, in a letter, "the subtlest, workinest villain that is on the face of the earth."

to go over to James, and one of these was Jack Churchill, Any excuse would do. The warrant was issued on the strength of a story told by one Robert Young, notoriously a perjurer. Young swore that Churchill was plotting for the restoration of James. The irony lay in the fact that Churchill *was* doing just that, although Robert Young had no true evidence against him.

To the Tower he went—to that grim old jail where many a better man, and many a worse, had moped in solitude, wondering.

He was permitted visitors only by special orders of Nottingham, the Secretary of State. Sarah of course went to see him, but most of his friends were afraid to bring suspicion upon themselves by visiting the prisoner. Everybody in England was growing suspicious of everybody else: there seemed to be no doubt that James was coming.

Jack Churchill was perhaps the least worried person in the kingdom. He had not written all those touching letters to St. Germain for nothing. James had issued a proclamation promising many things, including a general amnesty with a long list of exceptions; the name of John Churchill was near the top of that list, but James had assured him, by private letter, that it had been placed there only to keep him free from suspicion, since William was sure to see a copy of the proclamation.[3] Even while he sat in the Tower, Churchill had among his effects at St. Albans a promise of complete pardon in James's own handwriting.

So let them do what they wanted. He did not need to be

[3] Here is a good glimpse of James's character. Although the proclamation was issued four years after the Revolution, the names of every one of those sailors who had boarded his hoy off Emley Ferry, and had made him prisoner, were on the list of those not to be pardoned under any circumstances.

worried. He would lose no sleep. If James regained the throne, Churchill would be released from jail, a martyr. If William kept the throne, Churchill could easily prove himself innocent of the charges brought by Robert Young, a mere political catspaw. In either case, his goods could not legally be confiscated, and he had been out of office anyway.

James did not regain the throne. That man, and his son and oldest grandson, were the unluckiest fellows in all history. This time the weather was against him. The French fleet was penned in harbor for almost six weeks, and the same wind that kept it there enabled the Dutch fleet to join the English. De Tourville had orders to seek out the English and give battle at all costs. When King Louis heard that the Dutch and English fleets had managed to combine, he countermanded those orders. But it was too late. De Tourville had sailed. Outnumbered almost two to one, the gallant Frenchman was badly beaten. Poor James himself saw the French men-of-war pursued and fired; standing on Cape La Hogue, he watched the navy he himself had built defeating the navy which should have brought him back his heritage. Why have historical painters missed that scene?

The alarm was over. William went on marching troops back and forth, occasionally being defeated, never winning. Jack Churchill remained in jail.

Princess Anne gave birth to another child. Queen Mary graciously paid her sister a visit after the delivery. Mary said, without any preliminaries: "I have taken the first step by coming to you. Now I expect you to take the next step by dismissing Lady Marlborough." But Anne was a Stuart herself, with all the Stuart stubbornness. She would not budge

an inch. Mary stamped off, and the royal sisters never saw one another again.

Many writers have accused William of political short-sightedness in denying Churchill lucrative positions. But even if William had given Churchill the place he wanted—the command of the army—Churchill would have continued to communicate with James, nor would he have behaved any differently in such a crisis as that of 1688 or that which the winds averted in 1692. It was more, now, than a matter of personal safety, more even than a matter of money. Churchill had definitely become one of a small group of noblemen who were bent on tearing all power from the King. They wanted not a monarch, but a figurehead; they thought only of themselves; not of the nation; they were a close-knit organization, unscrupulous, diabolically clever, interconnected by marriage, and very wealthy. As long as Churchill had remained faithful to James, as Duke of York and as King, these men had been, technically at least, his enemies. They were the old exclusionists. But now he belonged to them; he had cast his lot with them, and he was playing the game as they played it.

After a month and a day, and after the invasion scare had subsided, he swore out a writ of habeas corpus and was released. Lord Halifax and the Duke of Shrewsbury supplied his bail of £6,000; for punishment they were dismissed the following day from the Privy Council by Mary, regent during her husband's absence abroad. Robert Young, tried for perjury, was convicted, and the whole case against the Earl of Marlborough collapsed.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

Caliban's Protégé

PATRIOTISM was invented, or cultivated, or compounded, sometime subsequent to the seventeenth century. While Jack Churchill flourished, patriotism was unknown, undreamed of. You fought then for your own glory, or for that of your lord or prince, or for that of your particular class. But you did not fight for the glory of your nation. War, with all its preliminaries and appendices of diplomacy, was a game. It was like a modern Presidential election in these United States—a contest which amuses some, excites many, entertains all, but seems not to matter much one way or the other, except to the office-holder. It was an affair of personalities, not of issues.

In those days no one condemned Jack Churchill for corresponding with James the Second after William was on the throne. Since then, historians have equipped themselves with consciences unconceived and inconceivable in the seventeenth century, and thus robed, have impressively, throatily pronounced black verdicts. That is like blaming the men of those days for using candles instead of electric bulbs.

There was the Brest business, for instance. William planned a surprise attack upon that French coast town, and spent considerable time getting together the fleet and army and setting into circulation false stories of their destination. The army attack was to be in charge of an Englishman,

Tollemache, who had been made a lieutenant general, Churchill being still in disgrace. King Louis got wind of it and ordered the fortifications at Brest to be strengthened and the garrison heavily reënforced. Tollemache, when he learned of this, should have turned back: it would not have dimmed his honor as a soldier, for it was no fault of his that the alarm had been spread before his coming. But Tollemache lost his head, and in consequence his life as well. The English were beaten off with many casualties. The fleet limped home.

Who had warned King Louis? We do not know to this day. Jack Churchill has been given all the blame because of the discovery, many years afterwards, of a French translation of a letter he was supposed to have written to James, in cipher, telling of the proposed attack upon Brest. The original of this letter has never been found.

Yet historians have generally disregarded the fact that King Louis had ordered his greatest engineer, Vauban, to strengthen the Brest fortifications *more than three weeks before Churchill's letter had been sent*. There were plenty of other persons writing to James at this time, and many of them were in public office and had far better opportunities to learn state secrets than had Churchill, a mere private gentleman. At least one of these men, and probably half a dozen of them, sent word of the proposed attack to James, who informed Louis. Churchill, before he wrote his own letter, must have known this.

Then why did he write? Because here was his chance to give James some genuine information which might look valuable. James could verify it by the information already received, and Churchill would be raised in his estimation.

A despicable business, all through. But historians who lay

the deaths of many brave English soldiers at Churchill's doorstep are either melodramatic or ignorant. If Churchill had been dead, the attack would have failed just the same; it never should have been made at all, once the secret was out.

A few writers have gone even farther, asserting that Churchill gave the secret of the expedition's destination to France simply out of jealousy of Tollemache. This is preposterous. At no time in his career did he stoop to petty spite. He was not always a good man, but when he was treacherous he was treacherous on a grand scale.

In December of 1694 Queen Mary died, after a week's illness, of smallpox. Swans are ugly out of water. This woman in a state carriage, or on a balcony, looked lovely and royal; but in the council chamber, in the drawing-room, you saw that she was stupid, narrow-minded, petty, and prejudiced.

Mary had grown very stout, but it was the weight of her English blood rather than of her body which steadied the throne she shared with William. The two had no children. It would appear that the trouble was with him, for Mary was in the main a healthy person, and William's favorite mistress, although she bore her lover no children, had several later by her own husband.

Anne's importance was greatly increased by the death of her sister, and William was obliged to be good to her. He himself held nothing against the Princess; and the Churchills induced her to write him a letter of condolence which was, in effect, a peace move. William responded readily enough by giving her St. James's palace and returning the military guard of which Mary in spite had deprived her after their quarrel.

But still William did not take Jack Churchill back into favor, although he needed him. In 1692 William fought one

battle with the French, Steenkerke, and lost. In 1693 he fought another, Landon, and lost again. In 1694 and 1695 he lost no battles because he engaged in none. Parliament was grumbling about the great expense of the war; the government could not raise money at seven per cent.; and only constant pleading prevented Godolphin from resigning as Lord Treasurer.

In 1693 France was very low—not because of anything William had accomplished, but because of bad harvests—and Louis the Fourteenth suggested peace. William refused to treat with him because Louis would not recognize William as King of England, Scotland, and Ireland. So the war was continued, stupidly, without result; and the Parliamentary grumbling was louder.

In 1696 James was again prepared to invade England with a French army. And again the Stuart bad luck played against him. An over-zealous Jacobite, Sir John Fenwick, had entered into a scheme for assassinating William; and when Fenwick was arrested and the scheme exposed, public indignation was so great that poor James was obliged to admit that an invasion under the circumstances, with William downright popular for the hour, would be folly.

Fenwick tried to save his neck by naming as his associates men whom he knew to be corresponding with James—Marlborough, Godolphin, Bath, Shrewsbury, and Russell. But nobody believed him. Jack Churchill told the House of Lords, in a speech, that he was honored to be placed in the company of such gentlemen as Godolphin, Shrewsbury, Bath and Russell, but that he had entered into no dealings with Fenwick. The others said the same thing—and told the truth. They were all communicating with the royal exile, but they

had not been involved in Fenwick's plot. Neither, for that matter, had James—yet James suffered because of it.

It is notable, however, that after the Fenwick business (Fenwick himself of course was decapitated), the distinguished traitors refused to commit themselves in writing to James, sending their messages to him orally through spies. They had been frightened.

In October of that year Godolphin resigned. He did not like war. The Bank of England was charging the government nine per cent. Louis again suggested peace; and this time Louis agreed to recognize William as the actual King of England, Scotland, and Ireland. The Dutch eagle could not refuse. They signed the treaty at Ryswick. It meant even less than most treaties: neither William nor Louis had any intention of respecting it.

But Parliament, naïvely supposing that the war was over, insisted upon drastic cuts in the army and navy. The army was to be reduced from 88,000 men to 7,000, the navy was to be reduced in proportion. William was frantic. Louis, wily Louis, smiled.

However, a great part of the army remained in service, for the simple reason that there was no money with which to pay off the men. The same condition prevailed in the navy.

Early in 1698 my Lord Marlborough was at last officially restored to favor. Forty-eight years old, he had, until the time of his enforced retirement six years before, held some sort of public position, military or civil, since the age of 14, when he had been made a page to the Duke of York. Now he was created governor of the Duke of Gloucester, only survivor of the nineteen children Anne had borne her coin-collecting prince from Denmark. Since the three crowns

would go from William to Anne, and from Anne they would go to her offspring, this Duke of Gloucester was a very important lad. Churchill drew £2,000 a year for the governorship.

"Teach him to be like yourself," instructed William, "and my nephew will not want for accomplishments." Which was true enough.

About the same time Churchill resumed his position on the Privy Council. To understand this, you must remember that hatred of France was by far the strongest emotion which raged in William's puny, cough-shaken body. William knew that he was going to die soon: he felt it. Then there would be nobody to fight Louis. And Louis must be humbled, must be brought to his knees begging for mercy! William, in spite of all his failures, believed that he himself was the one person in the world who could do that. Yet he knew that the next hand upon the ship of state's rudder would be Churchill's; and Churchill might, if he gave all that was in him, manage to finish the good work. He was, after all, a wonderful soldier, despite the fact that he had not seen very much campaigning. William was a shrewd little fellow; he had a purpose in smiling upon Churchill again.

There was another death about this time, and a very important one—that of Charles the Second of Spain. For years he had been weakening; and because he was without children, and because Spain, although degenerate, was wealthy still, there were many eyeing his throne. Aged Leopold, Emperor of Austria, claimed it for his second son, the Archduke Charles. The King of France announced that his grandson, Philip, Duke of Anjou, would be the next occupant of the Escurial. After much backstairs bickering, they com-

promised upon the Prince of Bavaria, who upset all their plans, and reopened the whole quarrel, by dying a few months later.

Now Louis's claim was perhaps sounder than Leopold's, for his fat and ugly wife was a member of the Spanish royal house. Louis, when he married, had agreed never to use this alliance to lay a claim to the Spanish throne. But what's a promise to a king? Ministers of Spanish Charles, their purses aclink with French gold, had finally prevailed upon the half-imbecile king, just before his death, to sign a declaration that the crown should descend to the Bourbons; and after Charles's death, armed with this document, Louis descended upon all the fortresses in the Spanish Netherlands.

The Spanish Netherlands consisted of provinces of Brabant and Flanders, between France and Holland, which were, naturally, of paramount importance to the smaller nation as protection against French invasion. Spain, finding these provinces with all their fortresses expensive, at one time had considered ceding them to France in exchange for some territory in the Pyrenees which would be more convenient; but at this Holland had protested loudly, and had finally agreed to garrison all the Spanish Netherlands fortresses at her own expense rather than permit them to fall into the hands of Louis the Fourteenth.

It was upon these fortresses, with their Dutch garrisons, that Louis now pounced, taking each and every one of them in the name of his grandson. He made the garrison soldiers prisoners and refused to release them until the States General formally recognized the young Bourbon as King of Spain.

Holland, with Frenchmen right at her doorstep, knew what that refusal meant. William, in a black rage, began to

reorganize his Dutch army; as Stadholder of the United Provinces, he had been obliged to recognize Philip the Fifth in a formal letter—an action which did not increase his love for the elegant grandfather.

Louis sent Philip to Spain with: "*Désormais, il n'y a plus de Pyrenees.*" Louis could always be counted upon to say something like that.

Serenely, majestically, the eighteenth century dawned. All Europe was at peace, a quiet, satisfied continent where monarchs called one another pleasant names, the carriers of commerce moved to and fro unmolested, and the people smiled as they went about their normal pursuits of raising children and making money.

But a rainbow arched that dawning. There were storm clouds just below the horizon, and the wind was wet. Nor did any statesman need ear-trumpets to catch the rumble of far thunder which rolled lazily across a sunsmeared landscape like the echoes of some terrible disturbance on another planet.

Wifeless William, quieter, more than ever resembling an eagle, had but one fear—that he would die before his work was finished. France alone, he knew, was nearly a match for all the rest of Europe; France and Spain combined would be irresistible unless other nations allied against them without delay. It was of as much interest to England as to Holland that this be done: for once the Bourbon had planted his banner in the Low Countries, grabbing all those ports and all those ships, England could count on her fingers the number of years she would remain free from France. It would be impossible to explain this to a Parliament constitutionally unable

to see an inch beyond the shores of the island; but then, William had little use for Parliaments anyway. Another plan was revolving in his brain.

In that first year of the new century the Duke of Gloucester, eleven years old and the last of Anne's children, died. His death, in the long run, would mean a great deal to England, Scotland, and Ireland. Immediately, it meant the loss of £2,000 a year to Jack Churchill. But my Lord of Marlborough could stay his tears. For the Dutch eagle unexpectedly created him commander-in-chief of the army—at last!—and a few weeks later Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary to the United Provinces of Holland. He was given the customary plate, very heavy and numerous, and an allowance of £1,500 for equipage, £100 a day for entertainment, and as much as he saw fit to spend on spies.

"Eagles, kings, and poets," Edgar Saltus has written, "circle alone." But William, both eagle and King, was obliged to adopt a partner, a protégé perhaps—a man who could be converted into a receptacle for William's ghost when William died. He took this blond giant by the arm, and talking in a low and very earnest voice, led him to The Hague, where there were waiting for him ambassadors extraordinary and plenipotentiary from many other nations, all agog with war talk.

Churchill was the master of ceremonies, the interlocutor at this international minstrel show. A born diplomat, as brilliant a liar as he was soldier, he had no difficulty arranging the Second Grand Alliance. He linked Austria, Holland, and England, made a separate English-Prussian treaty, a separate Dutch-English treaty, persuaded Sweden to agree to stay out and Denmark and several of the small German states to agree

to go in. He arranged for commissions, committees, councils, ceremonial signings, supplies, all the rest of it. Quietly smiling, scattering courtly phrases like small blue flowers, he brought nearly all Europe together into an agreement against France.

But he was always under the gaze of the eagle-King. Many times during that tremendous business Jack Churchill must have glanced up to catch those black Dutch eyes glaring a question into his soul—if he had a soul. Could this man do it? Would he finish the job? The two, in exquisite contrast, worked side by side, niggardly of words and of sociability for one another.

Churchill, as ambassador extraordinary and plenipotentiary, might have signed all these treaties out of hand: he had that authority, and William urged him to use it. But he played the game with the gang. He sent each treaty to London for confirmation before he pledged his word to it or affixed his own signature.[1] *Noblesse oblige.*

The day they signed the Alliance itself, James died at St. Germain. The prince who wore blinkers! His grandfather, Henry of Guise, had said, "The Kingdom of France is worth a mass," and had acted accordingly. James, who refused to switch religions for three kingdoms, died an exile.

Louis the Fourteenth, overcome perhaps by sentiment, perhaps by the pleadings of Madame de Maintenon, or perhaps by the very wrong idea that the English people would

[1] There was one exception: a treaty in which Charles the Twelfth, youthful and eccentric King of Sweden, pledged himself at least not to take the side of France. Churchill knew that Charles was the most unreliable monarch in Europe, who changed his mind in bewildering fashion, and never finished what he had started; but he also knew that the word of Charles was good. He did not risk delay, but took the signature at the first opportunity. His action was approved at home.

approve, declared for James's only son, the much-debated Prince of Wales, as King of England, Scotland, and Ireland—James the Third, Defender of the Faith, etc.

It was a breach of the spirit of Ryswick—if that treaty may be said to have contained any spirit. But more than that, it was incredibly poor politics. All England, and all Scotland, too, was indignant. They refused to be told by any Frenchman who their king was! Men who had been Jacobites rallied to the support of William. Ministers who had been plotting treason threw their plots into the fire and staunchly drank to the health of Mary's widower and to the double and triple damnation of all royal foreigners who tried to dictate to that Dutchman's island subjects.

And Caliban and his impeccable protégé, after appropriate public expressions of rage, privately congratulated one another. For *now* there would be no trouble getting supplies from Parliament. *Now* the people themselves wanted war.

William and Churchill returned to England. The English ambassador at Versailles was recalled, and the French ambassador at London was asked to depart at once. Everywhere during the Winter of 1701-02 the recruiting sergeants were busy, the drums were thundering, the battle standards were unfolded for parade. Everywhere new uniforms were manufactured, commissions and contracts for shoes were granted, cannonball and lead and gunpowder were concentrated for shipment. All over Europe men were telling one another that if it was necessary to fight for the defense of their rights, then by God they'd *fight!*

On February 21, a horse misstepped and threw its rider. The misstep of a horse had given Jack Churchill his first

chance. Arabella Churchill had been the rider then. This time the rider was William of Orange.

They carried him to the palace, where physicians worried about him. His collarbone was broken. It looked serious; but William pooh-poohed it, shaking his head, refusing to admit that he was badly injured. He himself knew that the end was near. He felt it. But Louis the Fourteenth must not be given hope too early: there was the recruiting, the supplies, to be considered.

If only he had a son! He had accomplished all that it was possible for him to accomplish: another war was started, the men were ready, the ships were ready, too. But he himself would not live to witness the opening of the Spring campaign. And no matter how he viewed it, the future was in the hands of Jack Churchill, whose tall, graceful figure stood at the end of every conceivable avenue.

Fiercely, from under his black eyebrows, William watched the fellow. He despised him—a feline dandy, offensively healthy, infuriatingly polite. But he *hated* Louis.

Could the man do it? *Would* he? Would he stick to the task, give it all his time and effort, steer Parliament and the Queen toward it, relentlessly, without pause? Or would he, as soon as William had died, slip off into another intrigue, dropping the war plans? Would he reach an "understanding" with Louis the Fourteenth? The dying man knew—had good reason to know—that Louis would be ready for this bowing, smirking dandy with enormous bribes. Would Churchill take them, allowing the war to peter out into nothingness, and leaving France to swarm over the United Province of Holland?

Heaven and Hell were remote problems, near though he

was to death. But Louis was immediate. What William had done, or had left undone, would be judged by Another: last-minute repentances meant little, if anything. But was this man capable of crushing Louis? That question pounded through William's feeble frame, monotonously, mercilessly. Was he? Would he?

Probably not. Discouragement slipped down over the crooked little man in the bed. Those unblinking black eyes glared through a fog of gloom. Caliban had slight hope, after all. While he had been alive, there was always a man to stand between Louis and Louis's insolent ambitions. But now—

He closed his eyes. And when they tried to tell him, in voices of forced cheerfulness, that he was improving, he shook his head impatiently. "*Je tire ma fin*—I'm almost done," he muttered.

He died, coughing, on March 8.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

The Drama On the Continent

AFTER William died the Marlboroughs ascended to the throne. Physically that piece of furniture was occupied by roly-poly Anne; but nobody was fooled; the real rulers, everybody knew, were Jack and Sarah Churchill. Anne, beaming, weak-eyed, and weak-willed, was a cornucopia from which titles and riches and gayly beribboned packages of power fell in profusion: for Mrs. Morley could refuse nothing to her dear, *dear* Mrs. Freeman. Sarah was made Mistress of the Robes and a Ranger of Windsor Park, and was given a considerably increased allowance and the Great Lodge for residence. Jack was made a Knight of the Garter. The new queen wanted to create him a duke; but the Churchills feared that this would be hurrying matters too much, and Anne obediently postponed it.

Ambassadors came to them. Stiff lords and earls bowed before them. They were consulted on everything of importance, asked about this and that, begged for favors, for positions.

It was all very impressive. But probably it pleased Sarah more than it pleased her husband; for the commander-in-chief, the Captain General of the British Forces at Home and Abroad, was mighty busy now. Before he went to the field he made certain that his interests at council were protected, persuading Godolphin to return to the post of Lord Treasurer.

"Unless the treasury is in his hands," he explained, "I can't be sure of getting my remittances." Then he crossed to The Hague. The Dutch did not want to take him as commander-in-chief: they thought he should not be placed above their own captain general, and when they finally consented to the appointment it was with the provision that two civilian deputies accompany the Englishman and exercise veto power over all his plans.

These deputies, Baron van Heyd and Herr Guildmalsen, knew nothing about war. They were politicians, loud in the council chamber, timid on the field. But they perfectly represented the men who had appointed them: they knew that real generalship meant keeping on the defensive, and they were not going to permit this Englishman to endanger the Low Countries by any reckless attacks.

There were further difficulties. The Emperor of Austria was having trouble at home; the Hungarians had taken this opportunity to revolt, and troops which had been promised to Marlborough for the Netherlands were needed to quiet them.

But the greatest obstacle of all was the smooth efficiency of the French, their preparedness, *esprit de corps*, singleness of command, and the awe in which the troops of King Louis were held by the rest of the world. Louis's nation was a super-state, his soldiers undefeatable: so it was supposed. There is only one word to describe it, and even that is a French word—*prestige*. France was the standard in warfare even more than she was the standard in dress, art, manners, morals, decoration, and conversation. Marvelous France!

And marvelous Louis! He was the greatest man in the world, the Sun King. A gay fellow, with his huge Bourbon

nose and his always-smiling eyes, he cracked a whip in the center of the ring. Now and then a financial seal failed to bounce the red-and-white ball properly on his snout; occasionally one of the diplomatic elephants did not wave his trunk as advertised; but the military performers were perfect. General after general, duke after duke, had climbed through the ropes for a tussle with Louis. One by one they were carried out, their great promise gone, their spirit gone, too, while the champion remained unmarked. And now another contender appeared, a man who had never been known to lose his head, the coolest challenger Louis had faced. But the betting was all with the Frenchman.

It was June before Churchill could get out of The Hague to Nimeguen, where he found himself at the head of some 60,000 men, about one-fifth of them British. Marshal Bouflers, a not clever veteran, was near by with a somewhat larger force.

Churchill first proposed an invasion of Brabant as the one move likely to upset Bouflers's plans by obliging him to give battle or else lose his communications with Brabant. The unexpected, Churchill argued, was the thing to do. But this was more than Baron van Heyd and Herr Guildmalsen could comprehend. They only observed that to invade Brabant would be to leave the country between the Rhine and Nimeguen unprotected. They vetoed the plan.

Churchill offered another, and this the deputies accepted with reservations. The Allied army made a few feints, crossed the Meuse, and then suddenly moved to a place where, according to all the known rules of warfare, it had no business to be. Bouflers was surprised. Sixty thousand men were between him and his lines in Flanders, and to get to those lines

it would be necessary for him to march over a large empty heath near Marlborough's army. He made a great show of collecting forage, as though he were about to dig in where he was; and then he started a night march.

Jack Churchill was not fooled. He was never fooled in military matters. He knew Bouflers would try a night march; he knew where Bouflers would go; he knew that the Frenchman, going there, would be temporarily at his mercy. He made ready to attack.

But at this point Baron van Heyd and Herr Guildmalsen exploded into stuttered protests. *Attack!* It was madness. Attack *Frenchmen!* It simply was not done.

Now Churchill knew that if he made the attack he would win a considerable victory; and he knew also that in the excitement following that victory, his disobedience of the deputies would be forgotten. But, he reasoned, this fact would later be remembered; it would give his enemies a club to be used against him; it would trouble the already too timid Dutchmen, disinclining them to trust again so audacious and independent a commander. So Churchill did not insist. But to prove to the Dutchmen that they didn't know what they were talking about, he led them to the edge of the heath, where they saw Bouflers's men stumbling along "in the greatest confusion and disorder imaginable," according to an eyewitness. It was, of course, too late then to make the attack; but even van Heyd and Guildmalsen were probably able to perceive that a golden opportunity had been lost.

Still, there had been some gain. Marlborough was able to withdraw a considerable body of men from the no-longer-threatened Maestricht, where Dutch nervousness had obliged him to station a topheavy garrison. And the French were left

wondering whether this new Allied commander had forced that night march purposely or by accident.

Soon afterward a large convoy of bread wagons moved out of Grave, passing near Bouflers. The French commander marveled that even an Englishman could be so stupid as to expose his provisions in this manner, and of course decided to intercept the convoy. He started north to do so—and the Allies slipped swiftly out of Helchteren and into a position between the French and their line of fortifications. Bouflers, amazed, paused. Was this, too, an accident, or was it part of some brilliant scheme? Pondering, he let the bread convoy pass unmolested and sidestepped into some enclosed country where he was safe from attack. But when the convoy's military escort started to return, it was too good an opportunity to be missed. The Englishman must be possessed of more than the customary incompetence, Bouflers reasoned, and it was good generalship to take advantage of your enemy's blunders. He ceased to ponder and marched out into the open plain, where he expected to find the escort. He was not disappointed. The escort was there. But so was *all the rest of the Allied army,* fresh and drawn up for action. How they had got there was more than the Frenchman could manage to comprehend in the little time left him, for they began to attack promptly. Bouflers did not dare withdraw in daylight: he would have been wiped out. He was obliged to form for battle, though his troops were tired and his position a poor one.

This was precisely what Jack Churchill had planned. But again Baron van Heyd and Herr Guildmalsen interfered. It was five o'clock in the afternoon. Connonading had been started. Cavalry on both wings were skirmishing, feeling

WILLIAM III

From a portrait by Netscher. Engraved by W. Holl

out the enemy. The infantry was formed and ready to charge. But the Dutch deputies insisted that the attack be deferred; darkness came, and Bouflers, a very lucky man, escaped.

Without numerous maps, or even with them, this campaign is difficult to follow: If you have ever seen one fencer touch another repeatedly, anticipating every attack, parrying every thrust, disregarding every feint, moving forward all the time and never failing to take advantage of an opening, until his opponent is frightened out of the ability to do anything but parry in blind hope—if you have seen this, you will understand. Bouflers stumbled here, and he stumbled there. Wherever he went, the Allies were there first. Whatever he planned the Allies anticipated. In fact, Jack Churchill *was doing the Frenchman's thinking for him.* If Churchill wanted to have Bouflers make a certain move, he himself moved in such a way as to suggest it; and then, when Bouflers had adopted the suggestion, honestly supposing it to be an original thought, Churchill was ahead of him.

Churchill wanted Venlo. He drew off Bouflers with a feint, and then besieged and took the place. Ruremonde was invested and taken in the same manner. So was Kaiserwerth.

Churchill wanted Liége. He moved toward it. Bouflers could have intercepted him, and had started to do so when he learned that the Allies had abruptly changed their direction of march. Another of these brilliant feints? Damn it! they could not fool him again! He ordered a double-quick to get ahead of the Allies; and he was double-quicking it in fine style when he learned that the Allies had turned in their tracks and were before Liége, which they captured. Jack Churchill had simply feinted a feint.

A happy man was Bouflers when that war season ended!

He staggered back to Paris, gasping, his head in a whirl. And Louis, magnificent Louis, raising his eyebrows ever so slightly, decided that a more competent commander should be sent to the Low Countries in the Spring. Louis was a great man. He was so great that while in the very act of defecation he used to receive distinguished ambassadors—and make them feel honored.

Jack Churchill went back to London. He did not swagger, as he had done in the gay irresponsible days of Barbara Palmer and the guardsman's uniform. He went thoughtfully; for he was tired, and there was a lot of work ahead of him. Discipline was poor. The Allied army was made up of numerous contingents—Dutch, English, Scottish, Danish, Austrian, Swiss—and battalions and squadrons from various small German states; each contingent was commanded by some personage who supposed that his blood and breeding automatically placed him at least on a level with Marlborough and entitled him to use his own judgment when he was not in accord with Marlborough's commands.

But in spite of all obstructions, the new commander-in-chief had accomplished much. In one campaign more cities were taken, more ground gained, than William had been able to claim after many years of warfare.

Elsewhere the Allied arms had not prospered. The Elector of Bavaria was prepared to join the French, who already greatly outnumbered the Austrians in the Rhine valley. Marlborough, realizing the value of a naval base in the Mediterranean, had arranged for the storming of Cadiz by a fleet commanded by Rooke and an army headed by Ormonde. The plan was sound, and the soldiers and sailors good men; but Rooke and Ormonde managed to turn the whole

thing into a fiasco, and Cadiz remained in the hands of the French.

Jack Churchill had plenty to think about as his barge carried him down the Meuse toward the sea. However, he did not waste time crying over what had been lost. His mind swarmed with great projects for the future.

Those projects were almost killed at conception when a French marauding party came upon the barge. The military escort had been lost, and the commander-in-chief's personal bodyguard was easily overpowered. Within a few minutes, and without a shot fired, the Allied commander was a prisoner.

Fortunately his valet possessed a safe-conduct made out in the name of the commander's brother, Charles Churchill. This paper he passed surreptitiously to the Earl of Marlborough, who handed it to the French commanding officer. A general, a diplomat, a politician, he must now be an actor too. He rose to the emergency. His large, bland features were smiling, his baby-blue eyes were disarmingly frank, and he answered questions in a pleasant, sleepy voice. The French soldiers were satisfied; they plundered the boat but permitted the passengers to continue unmolested.

London made much of him. He had never been, and never was to be, vastly popular. He was quiet, and did not seek praise from the crowd. But London, with the rest of England, was proud of him, and he was hurrahed with exuberance when he rode through the streets. He was made, at last, a duke—the Duke of Marlborough. He was granted with this title a life annuity of £5,000: he tried to have this pension made a perpetual family one, but Parliament would not go that far. He was created a fellow at Oxford. Even

his enemies were obliged to vote for a Parliamentary resolution commending him for his work in the field.

A duke. A great man. Sarah was proud of him, and so was the Queen, and the nation cheered enthusiastically. All Europe had become definitely aware of his existence. The challenger had showed well in the opening round.

But he was thinking of the sleepy fields of Axminster and of how comfortable and restful it would be there. He was more than usually quiet that Winter and went about his work with a heavy heart. Soon after the bombardment of honors had subsided he learned of the death of his only son, Jack jr. This was a terrible blow; for the great man had loved that boy, and had rested all his hopes on him.

However, he was a king now, for all practical purposes. He had duties, obligations too. He argued in Parliament for more supplies, bigger appropriations, additional military forces—and was given them. He argued in letters for the support of Portugal, Savoy, and other nations. And doubtless he argued at home with the beautiful Sarah.

Sarah, it seemed, was going too far with the Queen. It was possible that Mrs. Morley would some day turn upon a *dear* Mrs. Freeman who treated her with such cold disdain. "That little card-playing automaton," Sarah called her. The duties of a lady-in-waiting Sarah considered beneath her now that she was a duchess; for these, the actual work, she engaged a poor relation, one Abigail Hill, a silent, steady, hard-working female, apparently delighted to get the position and properly appreciative. Abigail Hill had a red nose and a gawky figure. Sarah paid little attention to her.

The designations Whig and Tory were then just coming into existence. Sarah was a Whig. Her husband, as much as

he was anything, was a sort of independent Tory. Actually he belonged to no party. He believed in a benevolent despotism—with himself, to be sure, as the despot. He did not like practical politics; he talked in Parliament and in Council only because he was obliged to do so in order to support his position and further his war plans. But Sarah, the spitfire, was constantly plotting, getting into all sorts of scrapes; she had a genius for making enemies, of which the Churchills were collecting an appalling number.

The new Duke himself was faithful to the Queen, supporting all her measures in Parliament. He was, indeed, a better friend to Anne than his own wife was. He was instrumental in getting through the House of Lords, against bitter opposition, a bill granting the Prince Consort a life income of £100,000 a year. He managed other personal affairs for Anne.

Meanwhile, he had made ambitious plans for the campaign to come. The situation in the Rhine valley, where two French armies were about to unite with the Bavarians, was critical. If these three could merge—and there seemed to be nothing to prevent them from doing so—they could march to Vienna and force a separate peace upon the Emperor; and without the support of Austria the Grand Alliance would surely collapse.

The French plan was simplicity itself—the simplicity of genius. Marlborough, in spite of his own wishes, was on the defensive before the 1703 campaign had begun. Of course the Dutch would not think of permitting their forces to go to the assistance of their allies along the Rhine, for that would leave the Low Countries unprotected, and protection was their fetish. It remained, then, for Marlborough to prose-

cute the war so vigorously on the western front that the French would be obliged at least to postpone their journey to Vienna.

He went to The Hague early, to meet the expected opposition. The Dutch turned pale and broke into bleats of protest every time he proposed action. But in spite of them, Churchill managed to get his forces in the field by the end of May—thereby disconcerting the new French commander, Villeroi, who had laid his own plans on the assumption that the Dutch would be late as usual.

The story of this campaign is a dull one. It was, from beginning to end, a disappointment to the commander-in-chief. Time and again he maneuvered the French into a disadvantageous position, and time and again the timidity of the Dutch deputies and the insubordination of fellow generals ruined his work. Villeroi was a more adroit leader than Bouflers; yet even Villeroi was no match for the handsome Duke of Marlborough, who repeatedly outgeneralled him. But Opham disobeyed orders, Cohorn disobeyed orders, the deputies refused to give permission to plans made with an eye to the future, and the Duke was defeated.

Oddly enough, it was what would previously have been considered a successful campaign. William would have thought himself lucky to come out so well. No ground had been lost, no important fortress had fallen, and the French had not gained any great strategic advantage in the Low Countries. But the dreaded trip to Vienna had been postponed only because Villars, the French commander on the Rhine, and the Elector of Bavaria, with whom he was to coöperate, simply could not get on together. Louis decided to recall Villars, and there was every reason to believe that

the march for the Austrian capital would be one of the first things on the Sun King's Spring schedule.

Decidedly, then, the second round had gone against the challenger. For he was obliged to show Parliament and the nation some definite accomplishment, and this he could not do. His enemies were demanding to know why England should keep a great army in the field for the benefit of an Austrian pretender to the Spanish throne. Why should England care *who* occupied that throne? And in fact, King Louis's grandson was firmly planted there, and the Austrian, Archduke Charles, seemed as far away from it as ever; for Philip of Anjou had been unexpectedly popular with the Spaniards.

It did look a bit silly. It made good political talk, excellent stuff to be told to the populace. Tax bills, too, had loud voices. The thunder of a crashing victory would drown them; but how could the Duke gain a victory when the Dutchmen would not permit him to attack, and when his own assistants (remember, he was not permitted to select his assistants) disobeyed orders and upset plans?

Moreover, the talk of ending the war, of Great Britain making a separate peace, was strengthened by the obstructionism of the Dutch, which furnished a legitimate excuse to break the treaty with them. French gold played its part, too. King Louis, perhaps the greatest master of bribery who ever lived, was shipping hundreds of thousands of pounds to English politicians assigned to stir up feeling against the Grand Alliance.

When His Grace of Marlborough returned to London after his second campaign he was bitterly discouraged. Faced with the latest batches of enemies his wife's insolence and

his own great power had created, he was obliged to pooh-pooh the very thing which most irritated him—the attitude of the Dutch—for fear this would be used as an excuse to end the war. He was also obliged to talk a sullen Parliament into granting fresh supplies and appropriations for troops; to protect his own and the Queen's political interests; to keep the Allies together and in working order; to lay military and naval plans for the coming campaign; and to handle Sarah Jennings Churchill.

If this next campaign proved no better than the one just past, the Duke of Marlborough was finished.

But his bitterness evaporated early, his disappointment was forgotten in the thrill of a new idea. In his fertile brain had been born a scheme which was to give Europe something brand new in warfare.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

The Madman

THEY were little men in the eighteenth century. They were not dreamers. They called themselves practical, and considered themselves enlightened; they sneered at visions. Such things as they did were done in bits; their schemes were carried out, if at all, an inch at a time. Pettiness was habitual to them, originality almost unknown. Dean Swift, who knew his generation, wrote of the King of the Lilliputians that he was "taller by almost the breadth of my nail, than any of his Court, which alone is enough to strike an Awe to the Beholders."

Whales there had been earlier, and later were to be; but in the beginning of the eighteenth century the pool was filled with pretty goldfish.

Then men lacked the ability to think of things on a grand scale. And they lacked, too, the ability to think or act in a straight line. They were crooked by nature. They travelled a tortuous course, inexplicably reveling in detours which were self-imposed. The age seemed divinely condemned to twist and turn, to peck and putter, to whisper but never to shout. There was very little honesty in it—honesty of thought or of action; there was very little sincerity, for the men appeared to be afraid to face themselves, and they dodged into falsehood and double-dealing instinctively, as a naked man might dodge into bushes even though nobody was near to see him.

These are reasons why King Louis the Fourteenth and the Duke of Marlborough (who would both, however, have been great in any age) seem so far superior to their contemporaries as to be creatures of another race, another species. Not that either was always honest or sincere. But each possessed the ability to perceive the obvious. Louis politically, and Marlborough in war, they were able to move on a grand scale; they were clear, simple, direct, and practical thinkers.

Louis did not go to war in person, though it must have been a temptation for him to do so, for war was a game it was grand fun to play if you happened to be a king and not a commoner. But Louis allowed his generals to plan their own campaigns. "We will fight here," said Louis; or "we will fight there." The generals were left to fill in the details: that was their professional function.

Yet the War of the Spanish Succession was essentially a fight between King Louis and the Duke of Marlborough—or, if you like, between King Louis and Dutch William as represented in the flesh by Marlborough.

Louis purposed to annex the Low Countries. When he found himself checked by an alliance of nations he held the Dutch off with one hand and with the other reached to take the capital of that alliance. The annexation program would follow when Austria was put in place.

Marlborough purposed to defend the Low Countries, and incidentally to crush France.

It is easily told. But it cost the Duke a tremendous amount of work and worry. That Winter of 1703-04 he made a flying trip to The Hague, where he found the Dutch discouraged. He argued spirit into them and left them preparing with unaccustomed vigor for the next campaign. Then he

turned his attention to Parliament, where he silenced, for a time, the opposition. He requested and got additional appropriations for the prosecution of the war, and 10,000 additional troops. Through Sarah he convinced the Queen that he must be given a freer hand with the armies—must be a commander-in-chief in more than name. He conferred with Godolphin.

What the chubby little Lord Treasurer thought of the plan for the coming campaign we do not know. It would have been amusing to watch his face when he heard it. But there is no record that he objected.

Part of the plan was made public. Portugal and Savoy had joined the Grand Alliance.[1] The Duke conceived the idea of sending the Archduke Charles to Spain, since the Archduke was, after all, a pretender to the Spanish throne. King Louis had already placed his own candidate there, and that experiment was proving a success. So Rooke was to take the Archduke to Portugal, and the Portuguese troops were to join the English and Dutch transported in Rooke's fleet, and to start an invasion of Spain. Rooke was then to proceed to Toulon and attack that city from the sea while the Duke of Savoy was attacking it by land. But all this was only a diversion. The pith of Jack Churchill's grand idea was elsewhere.

That Spring he told the Dutch that he wanted to carry on operations in the country of the Moselle. This was alto-

[1] Prince Eugene, whom you will meet soon, had been engaged for several Winters in trying to bring Savoy into the Grand Alliance. But now, as he was later to write in his memoirs, "Twenty thousand crowns per month from England, twenty thousand more from Holland, four millions for all the expenses of the war, and a kind of subscription by all the petty Italian princes, produced more than all my eloquence; and behold the Duke of Savoy, for a little time, the best Austrian in the world. His conduct reminds me," Eugene added, "of that of the Dukes of Lorraine formerly, as well as the Dukes of Bavaria. Geography prevented them from being men of honour."

gether too bold and the Dutch objected vociferously. But the commander-in-chief was not going to have another of his brain children, the greatest one, killed at birth. He dropped his suavity and showed fight, threatening to take the English troops into Moselle and leave the Dutch to shift for themselves; then the Dutch grudgingly consented to the Moselle campaign, deeming it the lesser evil. Churchill did not tell them where he really *was* going.[2]

He told Godolphin. And possibly he told Sarah, too. If so, then she had at last learned to keep a secret, for the commander-in-chief's true intentions were unknown to the world when the Allied army in the Low Countries moved toward the Moselle.

They had scarcely started when the Dutch sent an excited message that Villeroi was marching toward Huy. The Hague was in a panic. But Jack Churchill only smiled, sending back word not to worry. Of course Villeroi had moved toward Huy: he expected by that action to bring Marlborough back out of the Moselle country. The nearer Villeroi was to Huy, the better pleased was Marlborough.

He went on. His arrangements were made; his reënforcements, Hessians and Hanoverians, were ready; his men were in perfect condition, and supplies had been ordered in advance from the Rhine cities—a provision which did not betray his real destination, because the Rhine cities were near the Moselle country.

[2] Repeated reference has been made to the timidity of the Dutch. I would not have readers suppose that this indictment includes *all* the Dutch, or that it includes any of the Dutch soldiers, who fought as frequently and as bravely as those of any other nation represented in the Second Grand Alliance. The official voice of Holland was a timid one simply because it was the voice of her politicians; and Heaven forbid that we should judge any nation by its politicians!

He went on. He crossed the Moselle. He kept going. He crossed the Rhine. He did not stop until he had reached the Danube.

The Dutch almost swooned. William of Orange must have turned over in his grave. King Louis elevated his eyebrows the tiniest bit, taking snuff. King Louis's generals hurried to their desks, threw away carefully concocted plans, and started to work feverishly on maps. They were obliged to begin all over again.

For *Le Bel Anglais* had shifted the war center from Holland to Austria, and had stepped between the soldiers of King Louis and their objective, Vienna. He had moved 50,000 men 250 miles in less than six weeks; moved them in flank to the French lines most of the way; moved them without losing a man, and brought them up fresh and ready for action.

It had been desperate, but not rash. The French, had they learned his secret or had they possessed the imagination to prepare against this march, or even to take advantage of it as soon as it was begun, could have cut his army to pieces. But he knew that King Louis counted upon Dutch nervousness to keep the English in the Low Countries. He knew that Villeroi, with orders to remain on the defensive while other French generals captured Vienna, would suppose this march to be nothing more than another of Marlborough's celebrated feints, and that Villeroi would counter-feint by moving upon Huy or some similar place, thus putting himself even farther from the scene of future operations on the Danube. And he knew that the rest of his enemies, Louis alone excepted, were still unaware that the straight line was not an abstraction but in sober fact the shortest distance

between two points—while Louis, though he realized this, did not know that another man in the world realized it also and had the courage to act upon it.

Marlborough was not by any means out of danger yet. Villeroi, after wasting some time in gasps of amazement, started for the Danube valley to reënforce Marsin and the Elector of Bavaria. Even without this reënforcement, Marsin and the Elector had a combined force far superior to Marlborough's. The Duke set about joining his own force with the two other Allied armies near at hand, according to part of his original plan.

The first of the two commanders whom he met was Elector Louis of Baden-Baden—an obstinate old fellow whose idea of warfare was sieges, sieges, and then more sieges. Elector Louis could not bring himself to accept a superior. Who was this fellow Marlborough? What was his family? The diplomat poured syrupy words upon Louis, but the best he could accomplish was an agreement to share the command on alternate days—which meant that he would have to move just twice as fast as he had planned, and he had planned to move very fast indeed.

The other Allied general was a quite different person. Prince Eugene was, at this time, forty-one years old, twelve years Marlborough's junior. But he always seems much more youthful. Half French and half Italian, he was employed by the Emperor of Austria, whom he had served with distinction in repelling the Turkish invasion. His rise had been brilliant. "I was a colonel at twenty," he wrote in his memoirs, "a major general at twenty-one, and now (1688) was made a lieutenant general at twenty-five." He was an impetuous fellow who loved excitement, feared nothing, and, adoring

the dramatic, came to be a national darling. He was a natural hero, spectacular even in defeat, and very chivalrous. Innumerable songs in Austria praise him still. He was picturesque, proud, short, thin, and very ugly.

Before Eugene arrived Marlborough had persuaded Louis of Baden that an attack upon Donauwörth would be the best move under the circumstances. Capture of the town depended upon taking the Schellenberg, a flat-topped hill just outside the walls on the northwest. The Franco-Bavarians had fortified the Schellenberg and were fortifying it still more; and it was naturally a strong position. To take it would seem a work of weeks, but only a few days could be spared. Marlborough and Louis of Baden were fourteen miles away; the roads were atrocious, rains having been frequent, and it was Marlborough's turn to command. Louis of Baden began to plot out the formal attack, his specialty. He was working on an elaborate scheme, probably flawless from a textbook point of view. He had heard that Marlborough was a master at moving troops with speed, and he hoped that his fellow commander would get the men to the foot of the Schellenberg by nightfall, so that everything would be in readiness for the first maneuvers under his own direction the following day.

But Marlborough had the men on the march at dawn, and by four o'clock that afternoon his vanguard was forming for the attack! At five o'clock, although the greater part of his force had not yet arrived, he sent the men up the hill. Sheer insanity, said Louis of Baden, aghast. The Frenchmen and Bavarians held their fire until the enemy were eighty paces away. Then there was a volley which sent the Allies tumbling down the hill.

Marlborough rallied his men personally and sent them back. This time, after a terrific fight, they took the place. The Frenchmen and Bavarians rushed down the other side toward the Danube. Some of them managed to get across the river, but most of them were slaughtered on the way or drowned when the one boat-bridge collapsed under their combined weight.

The enemy casualties were about 10,000, those of the Allies about half that number. It was a considerable victory. Louis of Baden simply couldn't understand how it had happened. This Englishman hadn't even made a map!

Then Prince Eugene arrived. He liked Marlborough, and Marlborough liked him, from the beginning. The homely young man took the Duke's side of the argument in every council of war. Louis of Baden made them furious; yet Louis could not be ignored, for there was always the possibility that, as an independent prince, he would refuse to fight in their war and would march his troops back home. A curious council it was—little Eugene, wildly impatient, trying to make the dogged Elector understand that an offensive was the only sane policy; and Jack Churchill, large and bland, quietly, circuitously, but very earnestly arguing for the same end. And all the time Villeroi was getting nearer.

"We are now going to destroy the Elector's country in order to get him to hearken to terms," wrote the Duke, in a dispatch.

The Elector of Bavaria was cut off from his French Allies. By taking the Schellenberg, Marlborough had also taken Donauwörth, and all Bavaria now lay open and defenseless before him. War was war. The Bavarian Prince must be forced either to agree to peace and leave the French in the

lurch, or else to try to save his country by coming out into the open to face a superior force. That is, Bavaria must be flattened. The Allies went about it systematically: all structures were burned, fields were torn up, vineyards trampled down; nothing was spared. There is no occasion to try to justify this. Marlborough knew what he was doing, and he never tried to excuse his conduct—though many writers, comfortably seated in their studies, have condemned him because of it as a merciless monster.

The Elector began to come to terms. He sent a message to Marlborough, then another. He was hoping to gain time and cause the Allied commander to slow or stop his work while negotiations were in progress. Marlborough, however, went on with the destruction; family after family was driven forth, and the heavens were black with the smoke of burning homesteads.

The Elector was about to capitulate when he learned that Villeroi, to whom a call for assistance had been sent, had dispatched Tallard ahead with 20,000 of his best men. Then the Elector decided that he would not make peace after all.

In the Allied council it was agreed to besiege Ingolstadt, and Eugene and Marlborough were delighted when Elector Louis volunteered to undertake this assignment, for Louis was always happy when he had a siege to conduct. This took 20,000 troops from the main Allied army, but it gave Eugene and Marlborough a free hand with the force remaining.

The Elector of Bavaria, reënforced by Tallard, took a stand at Blindheim, or Blenheim, on the Danube. There they started to dig in, confident that the Allies would not dare attack. They had only to wait for Villeroi to arrive, or for Marlborough or Eugene to make a false move.

Tallard has been adversely criticized for this inaction. But he did the thing which all his training taught him to do. He realized that Marlborough, unless he could force and win a battle, was defeated where he stood; for not only Villeroi was coming, but Winter as well, and unless there were an emphatic Allied victory the Dutch would get their way and Marlborough's sensational march across Europe would have gone for nothing. And, of course, Tallard did not suppose that Marlborough and Eugene would dare attack him under the circumstances. To do so would be madness.

But Marlborough specialized in madness, and Eugene took to it also with a natural grace. They moved forward. "A feint," thought the unruffled Tallard, and continued to dig in around Blenheim.

Marlborough and Eugene went up into a church tower at Dapfheim and put their eyes to field glasses. They perceived that Tallard had placed himself in such a position that he would not dare retreat: he was too close to the enemy. But he was in a strong position and making it stronger every hour; his troops were at least equal in number to the Allied forces, and possibly superior; and his artillery was twice as numerous as Eugene's and Marlborough's.[3] The two generals in the church tower nevertheless put down their glasses and decided to attack. Jack Churchill retired to his tent, where he wrote a touching letter to his wife, and then fell to his knees and prayed for more than an hour.

He was up and active by two o'clock the next morning, moving his men through the darkness and river mist toward

[3] There are no official figures, and estimates vary enormously. Striking an average of these, it may be said that the Franco-Bavarians numbered slightly fewer than 60,000, the Allies slightly more than 50,000. The Allies had fifty-six field pieces, the Franco-Bavarians about 120.

the French position. Eugene's men moved with him, on his right. Marshal Tallard was not alarmed when this was reported to him. He had heard about this Englishman's tricks. He only wrote a postscript to the letter he had been about to send King Louis, in which he predicted that in spite of appearances the enemy were indubitably about to retreat. Perhaps they hoped to tempt him out of his wonderful position? He laughed. He was not going to be fooled.

But it appeared, in time, that the Allies really meant to attack. Much Tallard marvelled at this; and he chortled in delight when he thought of the overwhelming victory he was about to enjoy.

You would have agreed with Tallard if you had been privileged to survey the Franco-Bavarian position. Marlborough, advancing, had the Danube on his left, Eugene on his right. The French were strongly entrenched in the village of Blenheim, and, the banks of the river at this point being very marshy, a flanking movement was obviously impossible. The village was several hundred yards from the true bank of the river, but this intervening ground would not support troops, being all marsh. To the right of Blenheim (you are still with Marlborough) and slightly farther back, was a long ascent, along the top of which were Frenchmen behind temporary fortifications. At the extreme right were Marsin and the Elector of Bavaria. This wing was protected against flanking by high, rocky, and wooded countryside. Between the two armies, at the foot of the hill, was more marshy ground. No less than five streams, petty tributaries of the Danube, cut this ground; the most formidable, and the one nearest the foot of the hill, was the Nebel, which could be crossed only by two small stone bridges.

It looked as if Marlborough were defeated before he began. By the time he had crossed the first four streams and the intervening marshy ground, his men would, presumably, be tired. The enemy could easily dispute the passage of the two stone bridges over the Nebel, and still have time to fall back to their own defenses after further wearing down the Allies. Then Marlborough would be obliged to deploy his men for attack—a long and tedious business in those days—right at the foot of the hill, exposed to the cannon fire of the French. Even if he surmounted all these difficulties and got his weary men started up the hill, he would be rushing heavily garrisoned trenches and at the same time would be exposed to a regular flank fire from the village. In effect, he would be forced to pass the village to reach the top of the hill, and it was quite possible, even probable, that cavalry would sally forth from Blenheim and catch his upgoing troops in flank, cutting them to pieces if the enfilade from the village garrison had not already done so.

Certainly no promising prospect. Ninety-nine generals in a hundred would have retired. Even the one hundredth would at least have spent considerable time making plans, and would then have advanced slowly, step by careful step.

But Jack Churchill knew exactly what he was going to do when he put down those glasses in the Dapfheim church tower. His was the head-work. Eugene was assigned to keep Marshal Marsin and the Bavarian busy; he was, if possible, to make things so hot for them that they would call for reënforcements. It was an assignment for which he was eminently fitted. Marlborough would do the rest.

Properly to understand the battle of Blenheim, you must know what Tallard was thinking, and next you must realize

that Churchill acted on the assumption that Tallard was thinking precisely that.

Tallard knew that he might dispute the passage of the Nebel, perhaps of other streams too, tiring the Allies at the cost of very few men to himself. But with, as he supposed, a grand victory being handed to him like a Christmas gift, he feared that to do this would prevent the main forces of the two armies from coming to grips. He *wanted* Marlborough to cross those two bridges. He was not going to be satisfied with half a loaf. If the Englishman were such a fool as to walk into this almost perfect defensive position, let him walk all the way in, and be crushed entirely, not merely punished. Tallard estimated that when the Englishman had managed to get the greater part of his forces across the bridges, the troops from Blenheim and from the top of the hill could sweep down upon them before they had an opportunity to form for attack, could catch them in the confusion attendant upon the inevitable deploying movement, and could push them back into the river. The two small bridges would not be sufficient to permit more than an insignificant fraction of the Allied force to recross the Nebel, and the rest would be drowned or slaughtered.

So let the madman come. Tallard waited, smiling.

The madman came. He crossed the Nebel, as he had expected, without any real opposition. One of the first outfits to go over was that commanded by Lord Cutts, "The Salamander," an officer who loved fighting as some men love liquor.

The village of Blenheim was the key to the madman's whole plan. He knew that in it Tallard would concentrate his best troops, because he must prevent a flanking movement

there; because it gave him a place from which to enfilade in case the Allies ever got started up the hill; because the natural fortifications were better than those along the top of the hill; because the village covered the only possible avenue of retreat if retreat *should,* by some miracle, be necessary; and finally because Marlborough himself was on that side of the battlefield and was dispatching his favorite redcoats against the village, indicating that he was anxious to take it first. Blenheim was therefore packed with Frenchmen—eighty crack squadrons. All this was precisely as Jack Churchill had calculated.

Now there came an unexpected delay. Prince Eugene was having difficulty getting his men across the marshy ground on the right. Nothing could be done until Eugene was ready to launch an attack simultaneously with Marlborough.

The Duke made good use of this time. First he declared a public prayer, and the soldiers knelt on the field. The voices of the chaplains—Dutch, Danish, English, German—had for overtones the rumble of French cannon, for Cutt's men, on the danger side of the Nebel, were under fire now. Otherwise, all the world seemed still, breathlessly expectant. It was like that mysterious moment of silence when the grass, the flowers, the leaves of the trees, are motionless in awe before the coming of a terrible storm.

There were other activities than prayer. Workingmen were busy repairing bridges burned by the enemy; troops were shifted back and forth in readiness to cross the Nebel; officers were given last-minute instructions; supplies were brought up from the rear. The commander-in-chief showed the army surgeons where they could best station themselves in order to attend to the wounded: he was always careful

about the wounded, his own and the enemy's. He crossed one of those two small stone bridges and personally inspected his front line. Perhaps his only fault as a general was this habit of exposing himself. If he had been killed that day it would have made a tremendous difference in history. He did have one narrow escape. A cannonball struck the ground a few feet from him, showering him with mud. Staff officers rushed anxiously to his side, but he waved them away, smiling. A little mud more or less wouldn't matter. When he was satisfied that Lord Cutts's men were ready for the work to come he rode back to the safe side of the Nebel and sat down to breakfast with his principal officers, on the field. French cannon supplied the incidental music.

It was a little after noon when Prince Eugene sent word that he was at last in position. His Grace of Marlborough rose and mounted his horse. "Now, gentlemen, to your places."

Redcoats raced toward Blenheim. Rowe's brigade was in the van, and the men held their fire until Rowe gave the command by thrusting his own sword into the wooden palisade which surrounded the outskirts of the place. The fighting was desperate. Rowe himself went down, a red mass of wounds. The crack French troops greatly outnumbered the British and were driving them back when the Hessians, another part of Cutts's command, came up as reënforcements. Again and again the intrepid Salamander threw his men against that palisade, until at last he took it. The French troops were forced back into the village proper.

Having tasted blood, Cutts would have tried to storm the village itself. But he was commanded to stop. The outskirts were all Jack Churchill wanted. For now eighty French

squadrons were packed into so small a space that they were not able to deploy for action. They were bottled, and Cutts was the cork.

Tallard himself was in that bottle. He was very near-sighted, this Tallard, but even he could see that something extraordinary was happening—something not in the text-books at all. Prince Eugene, that dashing fellow, was battering Marsin and the Bavarian without mercy, charging again and again. Marsin had begged for reënforcements, and Tallard had gone into the village of Blenheim to fetch them. Now Tallard found that he could not get out again. Neither could any of his men.

The madman, singularly sane in appearance, directed everything personally. And this is the way I like best to think of him—sitting in saddle, very calm, almost languid in manner, but at all times master of the battle. The large handsome man, gray-haired, getting a little stout, with an eye that missed nothing and a mind capable of thinking in millions but not losing account of a tiny fraction—this almost perfect general was a traitor, a liar, a hypocrite; but it is impossible not to admire him as he directs the fighting at Blenheim.

Staff officers and dispatch carriers dash up, dash away. Commands are shrieked back and forth. The cannon roar, the air is filled with smoke and the acrid fumes of gunpowder, the crackle of musketry never pauses. It is a terrific business. The lives of thousands of men and the destinies of a dozen nations hang in the balance. But the commander-in-chief does not lose his head. He never raises his voice any more than is necessary to make himself heard above the cannonading. He is, it seems, everywhere at once, watching, watching, rallying the men, shifting troops, giving commands. He knows

exactly what he is going to do and how he is going to do it, and he never becomes confused or excited.

He finds in one pocket a slip of paper. He had checked a tavern bill on it a few nights before to make certain that he was not being overcharged. Now on the other side, with a pencil, he writes to his beloved Sarah: "I have not time to say more but to beg you will give my duty to the Queen and let her know her army has won a glorious victory. . . . "

Then the advance. The cream of the world's finest army, held impotent by a handful of men, fretted and stamped in a tiny town, while Allied troops stormed center and right. Only a few men were kept around Blenheim for a cork: the rest were shifted to the center and sent up the hill. French generals clamored for reënforcements, but there were no reënforcements. The cavalry went up, the infantry went up. Outnumbered now, the French in the center backed away. Marsin and the Bavarian found themselves unsupported and in danger of being flanked. Wisely, they ran. A few of those trapped in the village of Blenheim succeeded in cutting their way out, but most of them were hopelessly caught. The Allies walked around the place, neatly tucked in the corners, wrapped it up, and delivered it to smiling Jack Churchill as though it had been a bundle.

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

The Old Woman in Germany

A MIRACLE had happened. The invincible French had been defeated. No longer was the Sun King esteemed unconquerable. *Le Bel Anglais* at last had punched that lanky Bourbon jaw, and a general revaluation was in order.

Blenheim was a great material victory, too. The Bavarians and Marsin's men had escaped under cover of darkness, but most of Tallard's command were either killed or captured. There were 14,000 prisoners, including the Marshal himself. Marlborough was kind to Tallard, offering him his personal coach, guarding him from humiliating exposure, and sending him to England a distinguished and well treated captive. The other prisoners, though they were all his, he shared equally with Eugene, for whose behavior he had the highest praise.[1] The Allied losses in killed and wounded numbered about 12,500, the Franco-Bavarians' close to 40,000. More than one hundred field pieces and numberless standards and colors, besides silver, tents, supplies of all sorts, and munitions, fell into the Duke's hands.

[1] The Duke snatched a few hours' sleep in a mill on the field. He had been seventeen hours on horseback. The following day he wrote a second note to his wife (which, like the first, is still to be seen at Blenheim Palace) in which he asserted that "had the success of Prince Eugene been equal to his merit we should in that day's action have made an end to the war." And, indeed, Eugene had fought magnificently. Afterwards he himself said that he did not have a squadron or battalion that had not charged at least four times.

London went wild with delight. At the Temple Bar the Lord Mayor, in all the gorgeousness of state robery, presented Queen Anne with a sword; and she gave it back to him, symbolic of something: anyway, the crowd cheered lustily and long. Then the city companies and city militia in dress uniform, the Lord Mayor himself, the aldermen in their scarlet robes, the sheriffs on garishly caparisoned horses, the swanking foot guards, the bishops and nobles in coaches and six, moved to the blare of trumpets and the beat of drums to St. Paul's, where they thanked God for the victory. At the head of the procession, in a coach and eight, with outriders and footmen, and all the rest of it, rode Mrs. Morley and her *dear* Mrs. Freeman. Anne beamed and bowed; to right and left: she was ablaze with diamonds. Sarah, dressed with ostentatious simplicity, stared coldly at the multitudes.

The great hero himself had no time for festivities. There were several fighting months left. He called Louis of Baden from the now unnecessary siege of Ingolstadt and set him to besieging Landau instead. Villeroi, who had gathered together the remnants of the Blenheim army, retreated without even waiting for the Allies to advance. Marlborough would have pursued him, but it was important that Landau be taken first, and that siege dragged on and on. Louis of Baden simply was not to be hurried—not when he was engaged in anything he enjoyed as much as he did sieges. Marlborough and Eugene, by a surprise move, got to Trarbach before the French and started another siege. Both cities eventually fell.

At the conclusion of that war season the Empire was clear of enemy troops and the Allies themselves were west of the Rhine.

King Louis was as admirable in defeat as in victory. In-

stead of loud profanity, he said, when he learned that Tallard had lost his own son in the battle: "I am sorry for him, and I take due interest in the grief he must feel," and of the Bavarian Elector, Louis wrote: "The present position of the Elector of Bavaria gives me more concern than my own loss. If he should now conclude a treaty with the Emperor to preserve his family from being made prisoners or his country from being laid waste, that treaty whatever it will be will cause me no displeasure." Louis promised to sign no peace treaty which did not provide for the restoration of Bavaria to Maximilian, and promised also to back the Elector in any attempt to regain his territory by force of arms.[2]

Thus the champion; while the challenger visited the Electress Dowager of Hanover and her son, George, the Elector, at Herrenhausen, their summer residence. For reasons you will learn soon, he was extremely anxious to make the acquaintance of the Electress Dowager: the Elector he already knew as commander of the Hanoverian contingent in the Allied army. He found Sophia to be a charming old lady, sprightly in conversation, advanced in her ideas, and possessed of a rare sense of humor. She spoke excellent English, although her son, with whom the Duke also had several audiences, could not speak a word of the language.

Herrenhausen, about a mile and a half from the capital of this prosperous little German state, was a two-story wooden structure with a red-tiled mansard roof. His Grace

[2] If Marlborough laid waste Bavaria, he at least saved what was left of that country for Elector Maximilian. The Emperor wanted to take Bavaria forever from the hands of Maximilian's family, but Churchill used his influence to obtain both a good pension and some authority for the Elector's widow. Otherwise Bavaria would have been given a new prince then and there. Churchill, to be sure, did this for purely military reasons: he was hoping to persuade Maximilian to change sides, or at least to quit the French. In this he was not successful. The Elector stuck to Louis in spite of everything.

of Marlborough praised it highly. His Grace also exclaimed in delight at the orangery, the gilt statues, the eighty-six-foot moat in which gondolas (George had seen them in Venice) were operated, the open-air theater, the lime-trees, the hornbeam hedges, the twenty-six antique busts of Roman emperors. It was beyond compare! His Grace vowed that he had never seen such lovely liveries—blue coats, gray lace, gold buttons, yellow stockings. And the huntsmen, garbed in gray cloth lined with red, green froggery, gray hats, and silver buttons, brought cries of delight from him. He learned with amazement that there were more than forty servants employed in the kitchens and wine cellars, and more than one hundred in the stables!

Sophia declared that she had never met anybody *plus aisé, plus civil, ny plus obligeant.*

From Herrenhausen, Marlborough went to Potsdam. The Prussian troops had been hired only for service in the Rhine valley, but the commander-in-chief wanted to use them in Italy. He argued successfully with Frederick of Prussia, and was given additional troops and permission to use them wherever he pleased.

Not until December did he return to accept the deluge of honors awaiting him in London.

Of all the nations concerned, England was the most delighted with Blenheim. Less than one-fifth of the Allied forces engaged in that battle had been British, but these had done notable work, and nobody denied that it was *Le Bel Anglais* who had engineered the whole thing. The English considered it their greatest victory since Agincourt. They shrieked themselves hoarse when Jack Churchill came riding back. He was entertained in state by the Lord Mayor and the Aldermen;

he was received with superlatives by Her Majesty Queen Anne, and with kisses by Her Majesty Queen Sarah; he was given another colonelcy—that of the First Foot Guards; he was granted the Honor and Manor of Woodstock and the Hundred of Wootton, and Parliament agreed to build for him the most pretentious mansion in the three kingdoms and to call it Blenheim. There was another spectacular procession along the Strand, down Pall Mall, across the Park, to take the captured battle standards to Westminster. There were bonfires, speeches, salutes of cannon, toasts, resolutions, memorials, statues, and huzzahs without number.

It has been said, of course, that all this went to his head. There is no doubt that he was becoming increasingly pompous. Though careful still with money, even niggardly, he began to surround himself with an atmosphere of magnificence, as though trying to outshine the very Sun King. Some of this was probably the expression of a childish delight in his new-found importance. Probably some of it was for effect, the Duke calculating that it would impress the politicians. Some of it was his natural manner and the ceremoniousness which petty officials inflicted upon him. And no doubt, too, much of it was for the benefit of Sarah, that irresistible Lady Macbeth.

Yet Jack Churchill remembered old friends. John Evelyn, then a man of eighty, retired from public life, and whose good will could not conceivably have been of any political significance to the hero of Blenheim, records this in his diary under date of February 9, 1705: "I went to wait on my Lord Treasurer, where was the victorious Duke of Marlborough, who came to me and took me by the hand with extraordinary familiarity and civility, as formerly he used to do, without

any alteration of his good-nature. He had a most rich George in a sardonyx set with diamonds of very great value; for the rest, very plain. I had not seen him for some years, and believed he might have forgotten me."

The Order of St. George mentioned by Evelyn was a gift from Anne. A still greater gift, Blenheim Palace, which was to be "a monument of gratitude," seems to have pleased him even more. It would keep him in magnificence all his life, whatever the turn of the political wheel. And it would provide a home for his old age, where he could be a country gentleman, the sort of person he had long wanted to be. Best of all, it cost him nothing.

Of course, there were numerous Continental honors—medals, resolutions, orders, a few titles. But what pleased Jack Churchill (and Sarah) most, was an act of the Emperor creating him a prince—the Prince of Mindelheim. The title was to stay in his family forever, but the income, in spite of Marlborough's pleadings, was only for life. Still, it was pleasant to be a prince. In Great Britain, "your grace"; but "your highness" elsewhere in Europe: he saw to it punctiliously.

What could his enemies do against this man? Well, they did all they dared. The cry for peace they could not raise again, for the war was now very popular in England—more popular, for example, than it was in France. Marlborough's personal life was without scandal: be assured that if they had been able to find anything in it against him, they would have plied it mercilessly. But Sarah was different. She had been a faithful wife, and it was in vain that the anti-Marlboroughites tried to link her name with that of Lord Godolphin; so weak was this whisper that not even the hired pamphleteers ventured to give it echo; Sarah liked and

trusted Godolphin, and her husband wrote frequently to both of them, so that they were in constant touch with one another, but there was not the tiniest basis for suspicion that they were anything but friends.

Yet although Sarah could control her affections, which had never swerved since her sixteenth year, she could not control her tongue. Rash and headstrong, haughtier than ever before, she continued to pile up enemies for herself and her husband. And those enemies, themselves ambitious men, did not sleep; they were working against Churchill even when he was busy covering their nation with glory on the Continent; they were in high places, too—places from which it was impossible to budge them. "The Kings of England in the seventeenth century," writes Hilaire Belloc, "were like men compelled to hunt with wolves instead of hounds," and this applies to Jack Churchill (a king for all practical purposes) as accurately as it applies to Charles the Second, James the Second, and William the Third.

One petty victory they did achieve, these plotters. They succeeded in getting Rooke mentioned with Marlborough in the formal resolution of commendation adopted by the Commons.

Rooke had failed to take Toulon, though the fault was not his. He had delivered the Dutch and British troops, and the Archduke, to Portugal; and then had sailed off to carry out the rest of his orders. But the Duke of Savoy, hard pressed by the French, was not able to make the land attack upon Toulon which was to have accompanied Rooke's attack by sea, and the English admiral was obliged to withdraw. He then descended upon and captured Gibraltar and later roundly whipped the French fleet off Malaga. Marlborough's enemies

exaggerated the importance of Malaga in order to shadow as much as possible the glory of Blenheim.

Meanwhile, the rest of the plan had likewise failed to blossom. The Archduke proved to be a singularly listless pretender. Philip of Anjou was already popular with the Spaniards, who were generally hostile to the would-be liberators in Dutch and English uniforms. The invaders were outmaneuvered by Marlborough's own nephew, the Duke of Berwick, son of James the Second by Arabella Churchill, who had accompanied his father into exile and was now a general in the French service. The Portuguese went back on some of their promises.

So that in spite of Blenheim, the Allied cause was yet a considerable distance short of victory.

The commander-in-chief never hesitated. With the nation enthusiastic, the opposition silent, and Parliament actually eager to coöperate, he succeeded in obtaining additional appropriations for the war; he was granted six new British battalions, and the gaps in the existing ranks were more than filled. He was now in constant correspondence with Continental potentates—egging on this margrave, dickering with that duke, reminding another of promises made, arranging pensions, appropriations, commands, commissions, supplies —and all the time perfecting his own plan for the campaign to come.

There was even another matter which held his intimate attention at this time. That amusing old lady at Herrenhausen had by a curious set of circumstances become the next heir to the crowns of England and Ireland.

A digression is required. James the First had a daughter named Elizabeth—lovely, very proud, and tall. He married

her to Frederick the Fifth, Elector Palatine. She made Frederick a good wife, but the traditional bad luck of the Stuarts clung to her. Frederick, called upon by the estates of Bohemia to become King of that nation (as it then was), accepted after some hesitation; but he did not last long; Spaniards and Bavarians swarmed over Bohemia, and Frederick and his spouse lost the country and the Electorate also, and were set wandering about Europe—an awesome combination of blue blood, but penniless and without a home.

Elizabeth's chief asset was the Stuart charm. Champion after champion she found; for knight errantry was not yet dead, and it was quite the thing to fall desperately in love with the dethroned Queen. Such warriors as Duke Christian of Brunswick, Lord Craven, Maurice of Nassau, Frederick Henry of Nassau, and the great Gustavus Adolphus himself, did what they could to win back her kingdom for her. Their efforts, picturesque enough, were fruitless. And Frederick dying in due time, Elizabeth frittered away most of the rest of her life in splendid poverty (she was always a spender) at The Hague, where, as one of her own sons put it, her palace was infested with mice and with rats but most of all with creditors. She died in England after the Restoration.

She had her royal allotment of children. The oldest, Frederick Henry, was drowned off Haarlem in January, 1629, at the age of fifteen. The next, Charles Louis, led a gay life in England for several years, made two unsuccessful attempts to regain his patrimony, and eventually did get back part of the Palatinate—a sadly crippled country which he ruled as Elector. His wife had two children. One, a son, survived Charles Louis by only five years; the other, Elizabeth Charlotte, was married to the Duke of Orleans only

after she had been converted to the Roman Catholic faith. By the Baroness Louisa von Degenfeld (Ward calls her "a decorous Anne Boleyn") he had fourteen children: six died young, one drank himself to death, and the others became good wives or good soldiers, but not contenders for any crown, being illegitimate.

Another of Elizabeth's children was dashing Prince Rupert—*Rupert le Diable*. He helped fight the Roundheads, and later went buccaneering and from time to time soldiering, as the fancy took him. After the Restoration he returned to England, succeeded the Duke of York as admiral of the fleet, quarrelled violently with his older brother, and ended a variegated career puttering with test tubes and things like that for which he had the family fondness. He left no legitimate children.

Maurice was one of Rupert's younger brothers, and devoted to Rupert, whom he followed on most of his adventures. But Maurice went alone on that sea voyage from which he never returned. One report had it that he was shipwrecked and drowned; another, more popular, was that he had been captured by corsairs off the Barbary coast and finished his days in Algerian slavery.

Edward, still another brother, was married to Anne of Gonzago, an interesting busybody fresh from an affair with Henri of Guise. Before the ceremony Edward was converted to the Catholic faith.

The youngest child, Gustavus, died at the age of nine.

Of the daughters of lovely Elizabeth Stuart, the oldest, also named Elizabeth, never married. She was thoughtful, beautiful, and very proud. She ended her days as abbess of a Protestant convent.

Louisa Hollandina, when still a young woman, slipped quietly away from her mothers' creditor-infested court to France, where she became a Roman Catholic. Earlier in life the breath of scandal had brushed her. A Colonel de L'Epinay, notoriously an *homme des affaires*, appeared at the Bohemian court in The Hague, and began to twirl his mustaches furiously. Tongues went even faster. This fellow must, of course, be carrying on with *somebody*, and names of possible persons spun the rounds, one of them being that of Princess Louisa. Perhaps there was something to it, or perhaps de L'Epinay was one of those men who tell without having kissed. At any rate, Philip, another of Louisa's numerous brothers, meeting the Frenchman in a public street, drew and had at him, and de L'Epinay—whose talent as a swordsman apparently resembled that of Jurgen rather than that of, say, D'Artagnan—was run through. For some reason never made clear, Elizabeth disapproved this killing and Philip was forced to fly from Holland. Disinherited, he wandered about Europe, fighting wherever the fighting was good; he met death upon a Spanish pike. Meanwhile, Louisa was living sedately in the convent of Maubuisson, where she died the abbess at the age of eighty-six.

Henrietta Maria made an inexplicable alliance with a younger son of Transylvania, Prince Sigismund, and died a few months later.

And so it came to pass that when Englishmen, after the death of the young Duke of Gloucester, began to wonder where they could look for a king or queen, Sophia stood alone. Originally the ugly duckling and the youngest of the flock, she had fooled everybody by making the best marriage, and was now the dowager Electress of Hanover. There were many

others with a better claim to the throne, but they were Catholics.

Englishmen knew almost nothing about Sophia, and they were pardonably inquisitive. Would she make a good queen? stay Protestant? do as she was told and not try to run the nation to suit herself? They looked up Hanover on the map, hastily practiced what German they possessed, and burst into laudatory letter-writing.

Queen Anne preferred to drop the subject. She did not like to be reminded that sooner or later she must herself die. But others in court were not ostriches. Cautious always, they wanted to study Sophia, ingratiate themselves in advance, and learn what to expect. Anne couldn't live forever; and whether Anne liked it or not, they continued to train field glasses on jaunty little Hanover.

As we know, playing a double game was nothing new to the great Duke of Marlborough. But now it was a triple game, and he was playing it by negative methods. He and Sarah knew that they could not hope for more power under another ruler than they had under Anne: their problem was to retain what power they already possessed, and at the same time to prepare against all emergencies. There was a vast difference between the political and the military methods of the Duke. On the field he was dealing with comprehensible things—men, hills, rivers, cannon. But in Parliament and the Privy Council he was dealing with lies and hidden motives and double meanings, as unsubstantial as smoke from a small fire. Equipped as he was with the knowledge of his kind and with long experience, he could read the immediate future with some degree of confidence, much as a weather man, given maps and graphs, thermometer and barometer readings,

sectional charts and wind recorders, can predict rains or sunshine for a few days in advance. But no more.

It was not for nothing that he had, in official reports, praised the behavior of the Hanoverian troops led by George at the battle of Blenheim and elsewhere. Nor were those encomiums voiced loudly in Herrenhausen's gardens meant only for the ears of attendants. The Duke was corresponding regularly now with Sophia and with George, assuring them that the interests of their house would always be his.

At the same time he protested to the agents of the exiled James—young James—that a restoration of the direct Stuart line was his fondest wish. For the Queen, as she aged, waxed increasingly sentimental and was developing something not unakin to conscience. Her half-brother was writing her gentle but very penetrating letters, reminding her of the way she had treated their father. Anne did not like to talk about it—even think about it—just as she did not like to talk or think about Sophia. She abhorred the church of which James was a member, but her abhorrence of the Guelph family of Hanover, equally intense, was livelier and more personal. For it was Sophia's oldest son, George, now the Elector, who as a young man had come to England, had seen, and had declined to conquer the maiden Princess Anne; and it was not in Anne's nature to forgive that insult.

In William's reign Parliament had passed the Act of Settlement, which forbade any Catholic to wear the crown and officially dissolved all allegiance and obligations to any sovereign who became or who ever had been a Catholic. A foreigner for the next king or queen seemed inevitable, but the framers of the Act of Settlement took good care to provide against officeholders from abroad and entangling Con-

tinental alliances. The act stated that " in case the Crown and Imperial Dignity of this Realm shall hereafter come to any Person, not being a Native of this Kingdom of England, this Nation be not obliged to engage in any War for the defense of any Dominions or Territories which do not belong to the Crown of England, without the consent of Parliament." The act also stated that "no Person who shall hereafter come to the Possession of this Crown, shall go out of the Dominions of England, Scotland, or Ireland, without Consent of Parliament." And it further stated that only persons born in England, Scotland, or Ireland, or of English parents, even though they be naturalized, "shall be capable to be of the Privy Council, or a Member of either House of Parliament, or to enjoy any Office or Place of Trust, either Civil or Military, or to have any Grant of Lands, Tenements or Hereditaments from the Crown, to himself or to any other or others in Trust for him."

But now that Anne was older, and childless, and the Hanoverians were edging toward Whitehall, each English politician was eager to propitiate his future monarch, and flattery streamed to Herrenhausen by every post. The Electress and her son were unthrilled. Parliament put Sophia's name into the Book of Common Prayer of the Church of England, but "time will show," Sophia declared, whether the politicians really meant it.

No such serenity marked the attitude of Englishmen in power. The Jacobites were strong and might yet place the Catholic Stuart on the throne, especially if Anne, overcome with remorse, declared for her half-brother—which seemed not only possible but, as time went on, downright probable.

Jack Churchill, who had most to lose, was perhaps the most worried. It was impossible to treat intelligently with Anne on this particular subject; for she flew into a rage whenever Hanover was mentioned, and burst into tears if anybody spoke of James. And like his compatriots, Jack Churchill found it difficult to make anything of George. Sophia was very old, older than Anne, and George was the person about whom Churchill worried most. George was silent and suspicious; he baffled the Duke, as he baffled the rest of the English. They loaded him with honors, making him a member of the House of Lords, creating him Duke of Cambridge with precedence over all other peers of the realm, granting him the Order of the Garter. They heaped titles upon him—"so many," said Sophia "that I had to write them down in my almanack lest I forget them." But he was unmoved, and so was his mother. She had seen too many promises broken, too many grand plans collapse; and besides, she was old. George preferred eating and drinking and dallying with stout women, to the dubious pleasures of an island kingship hedged with so many qualifications. Others might fight for crowns. The Hanoverians were comfortable where they were.

Indeed, after a time they began to be irritated by the constant flow of honors. For the Englishmen did not send money, which would have been welcome, but only titles; and each new title meant a big delegation, and each delegation meant official entertainment and considerable expense.

The Electress Dowager and her son would not commit themselves to any party, or any cabal, or any personage. They made no promises. They were not rulers of the islands, yet.

"Time will tell," said Sophia.

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

Nothing Stopped Him

THAT Spring he was faced with a bumper crop of obstacles and delays. He proposed that the Moselle campaign he had previously outlined to the Dutchmen should now be carried out—promising not to fool them again by marching all the way to the Danube. But it was only after many days of bitter controversy that he was able to gain the sanction of the States General, and even then he was obliged to take along those meddlesome citizen deputies.

The magazines on the Meuse and the Moselle should have been filled; Marlborough had asked for this, and the Dutch had promised it in December. But by Spring they were only half filled.

Seven thousand soldiers from the Palatinate were at least eighteen days behind schedule. The Prussians were even more tardy.

Louis of Baden, peevish because the court at Vienna was behind in its payments to him, and also because he had been cheated of a share of the Blenheim glory, complained of an old wound and regretted that he would not be able to join the war this season; a personal visit and much flattery from the commander-in-chief at last squeezed some troops from him, but they were far fewer than those promised.

The Rhenish electors had agreed to furnish horses for the movement of supplies and guns. Now they found that horses were not available.

The Hanoverians were late. The Hessians were late.

Emperor Leopold died. His successor, Joseph, was prepared to carry on the war, but the attention of Vienna was of course distracted for a time, and it was difficult to transact business with the court there.

The Dutch insisted upon maintaining a force of ninety squadrons and fifty battalions along the Meuse for protection —a force twice as large as the commander-in-chief considered necessary.

So that instead of the 80,000 soldiers he had counted upon, Marlborough found himself with little more than half that number. To make matters worse, his gout was troubling him, and he suffered from splitting headaches. He wrote to Godolphin: "I hope the Queen will after this campaign give me leave to retire and end my days in praying for her prosperity and making my own peace with God." [1]

Facing the Duke was Villars, the best general in the French service. Villeroi, established behind defensive lines which were considered the strongest in the world, was opposite the Dutch on the Meuse. A third French army was in Alsace.

Marlborough purposed to beat Villars and then drive the French out of Alsace, at the same time cutting around the army of the Meuse. But Villars, under orders to refuse battle at all costs, backed into so strong a position that even Jack Churchill, the madman, did not dare to try to dislodge him.

Villeroi slipped out from behind his marvelous lines, captured Huy, and started to besiege Liége, precipitating a Dutch

[1] Most of these letters written from the field were dictated to a secretary, which accounts for their tolerable grammar and spelling. The Duke hated to write letters.

call for reënforcements. Marlborough was obliged to suspend all his plans and slip away under the guns of the French in a night march—a brilliant piece of work which won praise from Villars himself.

Villeroi, having done his duty by drawing the Duke out of the Moselle valley, abandoned the siege, abandoned Huy also, and dodged back behind his own lines.

Churchill wrote to Godolphin: "I am weary of my life." But he wasted no time. He saw through the French design. Whenever he moved toward the Moselle, Villeroi was to draw him off with a feint which would cause the Dutch to cry for help on the Meuse. Thus he would be marching back and forth while Villars, secure in his position, sent reënforcements to the army in Alsace, which would then resume the interrupted invasion of Austria. In other words, the Allies were in virtually the same position they had occupied before the breath-taking march to the Danube the previous season. The difference was that now such a march was impossible.

All Marlborough could do was move fast enough to worry both Villeroi and Villars, so that they would not dare dispatch reënforcements to Alsace. With this in mind, he proposed to pierce the lines extending from Antwerp to Namur, behind which Villeroi was entrenched; he would play that French game himself and force Villeroi to demand assistance. He consulted maps. The enemy, of course, would anticipate attack at the weakest point. The strongest point, just northwest of Landon, was the last place they would expect him. So he feinted at the weakest point, and when this had been reënforced at the expense of the strongest point, he made another unexpected and brilliantly managed night march; and

before the French realized what had happened, *Le Bel Anglais* had appeared just northwest of Landon.

There was a sharp action, the Duke in the midst of it. A French cavalryman, saber in fist, broke through the bodyguard and swung viciously at the commander-in-chief: fortunately he was over-eager, and, missing Marlborough completely, unhorsed himself by the violence of his own swing. The enemy were driven away in confusion, and more than a thousand prisoners were taken.

Now inside those marvelous lines, Marlborough maneuvered the French into the position he wanted them, and was prepared to give battle; but Slangenberg, a Dutch general, had disobeyed orders and was late bringing up the artillery.

Undismayed, and in a pouring rain, Marlborough again maneuvered the French into a place where they didn't want to be. The two armies were on the same ground over which the battle of Waterloo was later fought: they occupied almost the same positions as those occupied by Napoleon and Wellington, except that these positions were reversed. Churchill was face to face with his opportunity to deliver the knockout blow upon that Bourbon jaw. He rode out to look over the ground. A cannon boomed, and there was a shower of mud near him. He smiled. "These gentlemen do not choose to have this spot too narrowly inspected."

But the doubtful Dutch deputies wanted Slangenberg's advice; and that general, who was insanely jealous of the commander-in-chief sputtered indignantly. *Suicide!* His words decided the deputies, and the Franco-Bavarians were permitted to go free.

"It is very mortifying to find much more obstruction

from friends than from enemies," Churchill wrote to the Lord Treasurer. "I beg you will give my duty to the Queen, and assure her that if I had the same power I had the last years I should have had a greater victory than that of Blenheim."

The campaign of 1705 was ended: two thousand prisoners had been taken and a few petty fortresses reduced.

His Grace of Marlborough started a round of Continental capitals, calling first upon the new Emperor. They made much of him at Vienna; he was offered a palace of his own, but preferred to stop with his son-in-law, the young Earl of Sunderland, ambassador extraordinary sent, thanks to Sarah's influence, to deliver his nation's formal congratulations to Emperor Joseph on his accession. Marlborough was disappointed because he did not meet Eugene, who was busy in Italy. But he was pleased with the formal investiture of the principality of Mindelheim. Situated near Augsburg, this was a church fief; so that the man who had deserted James the Second because, he said, he feared the influence of the Vatican was now a Prince of the Holy Roman Empire. He saw nothing incongruous in this. People called him "Your Highness," and £2,000 a year went with the title.

Frederick of Prussia, angry with the new Emperor, swore he would not fight in this war any longer. Marlborough visited him and soothed his ruffled feelings.

He also visited Louis of Baden and said a few more flattering things.

Then he went to Herrenhausen. Sophia was angry. The Tories in the House of Lords, thinking to embarrass the ministry, had voted an appeal to the Queen to invite the heir presumptive to reside in England. Part of the scheme was to

have Sophia herself write to the Archbishop of Canterbury expressing her willingness to live in England if invited—in other words, Sophia was to ask for an invitation. This letter she wrote, and it was made public in the midst of the debate in the House of Lords, and Anne was furious. Sophia, finding herself a pawn in a political game and her letter ignored, was equally angry.

So the best diplomat in Europe wore his warmest smile when he went again to Herrenhausen; he said charming things; he played cards with Sophia; he cried in awe when they told him about plans for the *allée* of lime trees to stretch all the way from Herrenhausen to the capital, and about the waterworks which would be even higher than those at St. Cloud. He was irresistible. Once more the Electress declared that she had never met anybody *plus aisé, plus civil, ny plus obligeant,* and the situation was saved.

Next he went to The Hague, where, using all his own powers of argument and all the weight of his political position, he succeeded in extorting a promise that he would be given a freer hand in the fighting to come.

When, finally, he went home, he found the political situation somewhat changed, but not alarming. He had formerly been, as much as he was anything, an independent Tory. But now that party was losing ground, Sunderland, who had obtained the Vienna ambassadorship, was a Whig; Cowper, another Whig, was given the Great Seal; Parliament met, and the Whigs captured the speakership. Well, Jack Churchill played the political game as he found it. Honesty would have been the worst policy; consistency and fidelity to party would have brought suspicion upon him and probably would have been fatal to his war plans. To save time he followed

the line of least resistance; it was what Charles and William had done. There were an understanding, a banquet, and numerous toasts with Tokay; the upcoming Whigs said flattering things about the Duke, and appropriations for troops and supplies were put through Parliament without a hitch.

In Spain, young Peterborough, one of the Duke's appointees had taken Barcelona—and taken it so dramatically that the victory seemed greater than it was. The Spanish and French, suddenly deciding that Gibraltar was a mighty important place after all, tried desperately to recover that stronghold, but without success.

Jack Churchill went back to war with the assurance, bullied out of the Dutch at the close of the previous campaign, that he would at last have a free hand. He said an affectionate farewell to Sarah. He loved her. In the midst of all his plans and preparations (and at this time he was arranging for military campaigns in the Rhine country, the Netherlands, Italy, Spain, and Portugal, and naval campaigns in the Mediterranean and along the French coast) he was able to write her affectionate letters regularly from the field; and when he sailed from England he stayed on deck with a telescope to his eye, watching while the white figure of Sarah Jennings, on the shore, grew smaller and smaller and at last faded from sight.

Then he plunged back into the work at hand. For a time it seemed as if this were going to be nothing more than the old routine—arguments with the Dutch, tardiness of the allied troops, the obstructionism of citizen deputies, insubordination, delays, and all the time the necessity of playing long-distance politics in order to keep the war going. The Dutch, to be sure, were humbler than they had yet been;

but Marlborough's plan for the new campaign was more than they could accept. He wanted to march to Italy and help Prince Eugene. Even the Hessians and the Hanoverians made objections to this, and the Danes flatly refused to go. In spite of all his diplomacy and all his prestige, the Duke was obliged to resume operations in the Netherlands.

"God knows I go with a heavy heart," he wrote to Godolphin. Certainly it looked like the same thing all over again. The Danes were late, the Hessians were late, the Hanoverians were late, and latest of all were the Prussians. "I have no prospect of doing anything considerable," wrote the commander-in-chief.

He made a dash for Namur, taking Villeroi off his guard. If the Frenchman wanted to intercept the Allies, he would be forced to come out into the open and give battle. Marlborough had no real expectation that Villeroi would do this: the most he hoped for was to take Namur.

But Villeroi, moving into a strong position near the village of Ramillies, wrote to his king: "I am convinced that it must be to our advantage to risk a battle." Marlborough, of course, was delighted. All he ever asked was a chance to fight. His advance guard, arriving on the field at eight o'clock on the foggy morning of May 12, found the French already there. The Duke himself came up about ten o'clock, and while his troops were deploying for attack rode forward to reconnoiter.

The two armies were almost equal in cavalry and infantry; the Allies possessed superior strength in artillery; the Franco-Bavarians had a great advantage of position. The scene before Jack Churchill was strikingly like that at Blenheim. Facing him, on his right, were troops strongly placed

behind a marsh and a river: it would be almost impossible to gain any considerable advantage there. The center was covered by the village of Ramillies; at his left was another river. But the enemy position, facing him, was concave. Ramillies, in the center, was back from the two wings, and there was no river to protect it. On the extreme left were the villages of Tavières and Franquinay, placed rather forward: from these the enemy could catch him in flank if he moved against the center.

Villeroi and the Elector of Bavaria had laid their plans well. They were sure of themselves. But they began to have doubts when they saw the scarlet coats of the English and the gay kilts of the Scots moving toward the marshes and the river. This Englishman sometimes attacked at the strongest point: Villeroi himself had been surprised the previous year. It was well known that the Scots and the redcoats were his pet troops, upon which he placed the greatest reliance. So Villeroi and the Elector both hurried over to the menaced wing with heavy reënforcements.

The Scots and English pushed on. Evidently they meant business. Villeroi summoned more reënforcements.

The Scots and English put up a grand fight. They were actually crossing the river and might have driven back the French flank—when they were ordered to retreat. What was this? No one could understand it. Was Jack Churchill, of all persons in the world, ordering a *retreat?* permitting hard-earned ground to slip from his hands?

Villeroi, too, was puzzled at first. And when he did perceive the trick, it was too late.

Churchill left a small covering body on the right wing, and began to send the rest of the attacking force across the

whole field of battle, behind his own lines, toward the opposite wing. He could not have made such changes at any other point. But here, with Villeroi's heaviest force facing him, he did so easily—for the same marshes and river which Villeroi had expected to protect his flank were now preventing the Frenchman from spoiling Marlborough's plans with a counter-attack; only a handful of troops was needed to keep the French at bay.

Nothing could have been simpler. Draw an arc. Marlborough wanted to get the greater part of his army from one end of it to the other, and being on the inside he needed only to travel across the chord. Villeroi, unable to prevent the move with a counter-attack, was obliged to race his men all the way around the outside of the arc.

A straight line is the shortest distance between two points.

Smiling Jack Churchill sent infantry against Ramillies and against Tavières, and then himself led four solid lines of cavalry between them. There was an hour and a half of terrific fighting. The commander-in-chief was in the thick of it, cool as ever. The French Household Troops, the finest in the world, charged; the Allies were beaten back; the Prince of Hesse-Darmstadt was killed; a body of French horse, perceiving the Duke's standard, broke through his outside guards and charged him, shrieking victoriously.

For a moment it looked as if the beautiful battle plan was going for nothing, after all. Churchill's one avenue of escape lay over a ditch, and when he tried to leap it his horse failed and he himself was thrown. An aide-de-camp, Captain Molesworth, offered his own horse; Colonel Bingfield, another aide, held the bridle; the animal was rearing wildly. Churchill was in the saddle in one jump. At that instant a cannonball ripped

Bingfield's head from his body: he was standing where Churchill had been a moment before.

Covered with mud and blood, his uniform ripped, his wig askew, the commander-in-chief rode back into the thick of it. It was years since he had enjoyed so good a fight. He was getting back some of the old thrill—feeling, for the hour, as he had felt in those brave days under Turenne, when he had been a rollicking young colonel with everything in front of him and nothing behind.

He did not for an instant lose control of the situation. He must have been tempted, when the Scots and English made such unexpected progress on the right wing, to permit them to go ahead; but he adhered stubbornly to his original plan, which he knew to be best, and he won the victory he deserved. Villeroi and Maximilian of Bavaria came too late with the reënforcements. The Allies had swept everything before them.

A retreat? No, a rout. It was a greater victory than Blenheim, because here, with several hours of daylight left and the Allied troops still comparatively fresh, Marlborough was able to make an effective pursuit. Relentlessly he chased the enemy. All night his men were galloping after them, no let-up, no hesitancy, not even a chance to snatch a meal, until five o'clock in the morning.

The Allies lost about 4,000 killed and wounded, the Franco-Bavarians about 15,000 and many prisoners, standards, and supplies. It was three days before Villeroi managed to get his men back into some semblance of order; and even then he was obliged to continue the retreat.

The Allies took Brussels, Ghent, Bruges. Villeroi could not stop them: he did not dare try to stop them. They took

Malines, Oudenarde, Alost, Antwerp itself. Menin, considered a masterpiece of defensive science, fell before them. They besieged Dendermonde. It was blocked by numerous ditches, canals, and swampy lands. "They'll need an army of ducks to take that place," commented Louis the Fourteenth. But Dendermonde fell—though Marlborough admitted that he could not have taken it "but for the hand of God which gave us seven weeks without rain."

No pause. Nothing could stop him. He went after Ostend, an invaluable prize. The Spaniards had spent three years taking Ostend. Jack Churchill took it in three weeks.

He took Ath. He even wanted to take Mons. But by now it was October, and when the Dutch begged him to quit for the season, fearing that their own troops would be worn out, he consented. After all, he had done enough for one campaign. Flushed and triumphant, he rode back to London.

CHAPTER NINETEEN

A Swedish Comet

NEVERTHELESS, there was plenty to trouble him. His own successes had been unprecedented; nor had the Allied arms elsewhere failed to prosper. Louis of Baden, in spite of many entreaties from the commander-in-chief, had refused to take the offensive on the Rhine after Villars had sent reënforcements to Flanders. The generals in Spain, squabbling about leadership, had accomplished nothing. But at Turin Prince Eugene had won a glorious victory, as great as that at Ramillies. And a small English army aboard an English fleet had kept a very large French army busy racing up and down the French coast to meet a threatened invasion which was never made—a favorite trick of Marlborough's.

But the political skies were dark again. Sarah had acquired new enemies, new quarrels. And the Whigs were gaining power every month. It was necessary to play the Whig game and at the same time to placate Tory Anne. The Great Duke listened, nodded, made certain careful promises. He agreed to support his son-in-law, Sunderland, for secretary of state. Anne disliked and distrusted Sunderland; for that matter, so did Marlborough [1] and the Tories were bit-

[1] Young Sunderland had married Jack Churchill's favorite daughter, Anne. But the Duke had not approved the match and had given his consent only to please Sarah. Young Sunderland was a disagreeable fellow and a radical; his Republican theories shocked the conservative Churchill. Like his father, he became politically important in spite of the fact that very few persons trusted him beyond their sight.

terly opposed to him. Sarah had failed to get the appointment; it was the first thing of importance she had failed to get from the Queen. Godolphin threatened to resign unless Sunderland were appointed; but it was not until the Duke himself made a similar threat that Anne capitulated.

His enemies dragged their favorite weapon, the cry for peace, from a corner, dusted it, oiled it, learned that it was still good. The very successes of the Allies were used as arguments for peace—when they should have been, the Duke believed, arguments for further war. If they would only let him alone and keep him supplied with men and muskets, he would end this business once and for all. He *knew* he could do it! He had started the job, and he would finish it.

Louis the Fourteenth was a hard man to beat. Debonair, very ugly, and very wonderful, the most French person in France, he prepared for another campaign just as airily as he might have prepared for a ball at Versailles. When Villeroi came home, head hanging, Louis said with a laugh: "We're getting old, you and I—good fortune deserts us." Anybody would fight well for a king like that.

England was beginning to ask, "Is this a private war? Must we go on paying for all this indefinitely, just to give the Duke a chance to show what a wonderful general he is?" For Jack Churchill's enemies were now whispering that he was eager to keep up the war because his position as commander-in-chief brought him so big an income. The war had given him his dukedom, his grand mansion, his principality in Austria, most of his vast fortune. After Ramillies (and after the appointment of Sunderland as secretary of state) Parliament agreed that his title should descend to his daughters, since he was without a son; and Parliament also granted

him an additional £5,000 a year, to be paid (he made certain of it) out of the Post Office revenues. His enemies muttered that he wanted the war to continue because it meant money to him.

Yet he had refused the governorship of the Spanish Netherlands: they gave him no credit for *that*. The Archduke, upon setting out to make himself Charles the Third of Spain, had left with his brother Joseph, now Emperor of Austria, a blank commission for the governorship. The Spanish Netherlands at that time were all in French hands and there seemed little likelihood that the commission would mean much. But now the Duke of Marlborough, in one season, had taken them all back. He had been very careful to do so, in each case, in the name of Charles the Third of Spain. But Charles was on the Peninsula fumbling for his elusive throne, and the Spanish Netherlands needed a governor, so Emperor Joseph wrote the name of Jack Churchill into that blank commission.

The Dutch objected. They were not willing to see the Great Duke gain such political power—for the governorship would make him virtually an independent prince, chief of a territory larger than Holland, larger than most of the German and Italian states. He had gone up the scale of titles—baron, earl, duke, prince. Why not king? The Dutch objected. And wily Louis urged them to object still more. Louis clinked gold very near them, murmuring something about the blessings of peace.

Hearing these murmurs, the Dutch echoed them. After all, why *not* peace? They had gone into this war only to protect their own country from invasion. The protection was complete now; the Spanish Netherlands were in the hands of the Allies; and if Marlborough, the one man who

could be depended upon to beat the French, were made governor, why shouldn't the States General save themselves money by making a separate peace with France? It would be a direct violation of the treaty, but what were treaties? The Englishman had saved them from ruin; but since they were safe now, why worry about the Englishman?

And in London the politicians declared that if Holland stopped fighting, England should take advantage of this treaty-breaking and stop fighting also.

All this Jack Churchill knew. He thanked the Emperor kindly but begged to be relieved of accepting the governorship. If he had wanted money more than he wanted a successful war, he would have accepted a commission already made out in his name and placed in his hands. It would have meant hundreds of thousands of pounds to him—more than he could have made in twenty years as commander-in-chief of the Allied armies. But he refused, and the war went on.

In London, too, the war went on, but it was a different sort of war. The Tories were walking a dangerous path, desperately making eyes at Sophia in order to prove to the people that they were not, after all, Jacobites. Though they knew that the Queen darkened like a storm sky whenever the name of the German woman was mentioned, they passed an act naturalizing Sophia and all her lineal descendants, "any law, Statute, Matter, or Thing whatsoever to the contrary notwithstanding"—the only qualification being that Sophia or her lineal descendants must not be or become Roman Catholics. Then there was the Precedence Act, which started, much to Anne's annoyance, "after the Demise and Death of your Majesty, our most gracious Sovereign, whom God long preserve in Health and Prosperity," and continued

to provide that Sophia and her offspring could legally march in processions and enter rooms in front of "the Archbishop of Canterbury, and all Great Officers, and the Dukes, and all other Peers of these Realms, any Law, Statute, or Custom whatsoever to the contrary notwithstanding."

Anne wailed: "They are putting me in my coffin already!" She stuck to her Tories, but the Whigs were masters of the situation. The Duke, eager to conciliate both parties, resisted all efforts to turn out the Tory secretary of state, Robert Harley. Harley had been one of his best friends, had worked with him in many matters, and owed much of his power to the Great Duke. Yet Harley, a knife up his sleeve, was waiting with diabolical patience for the Duke to turn his back.

This Harley was a clever young man—young, at least, beside Marlborough. He and his partner of the hour, the Earl of Bolingbroke, were excellent examples of the type of statesman England was breeding then—cultured, devoid of conscience, sardonic always, brilliant in debate; they reveled in intrigue, and seemed constitutionally incapable of taking any straight course but plotted here and there, with this group and with that, for the sheer love of plotting. Just as the mercenary soldiers of that day wandered over Europe fighting in any war that was convenient, so these well-born Englishmen tiptoed from cabal to cabal. "History," said Bolingbroke, "is philosophy teaching by examples." He and Harley were the rising generation, the remorselessly clever young men who were bound to win.

Jack Churchill went back to war the next season with high hopes. He had cleared Germany, he had cleared the

Netherlands. Louis at last was uncertain of himself; the time for the final blow had arrived.

Toulon must be taken: the commander-in-chief never lost sight of the Mediterranean. He could not undertake this job personally, as he had hoped to do, but he persuaded the Emperor to assign Eugene to it; and when Eugene struck, he himself would go crashing through the French from the north. He wanted Paris. Only by taking Paris could he bring the Sun King to his knees.

The situation was brightened by the death of the Allied commander on the Rhine. His family erected a splendid monument for Louis of Baden-Baden. It was thirty feet tall, with expanses of rococo gilding and the inscription: "*Infidelium debellator, Imperii protector, Atlas Germaniae, hostium terror,*" and so on and so on. The Duke of Marlborough, delighted, sent an exquisite letter of condolence. The Margrave of Bayreuth was appointed from Vienna to fill the vacant post; Marlborough knew little about the Margrave, but estimated that he could scarcely be worse than his predecessor.

Then a Swedish comet flashed across Europe, leaving a trail of terror. All plans were suspended.

No one knew what Charles the Twelfth meant to do next. Probably he did not know himself. He had swept out of Sweden at a breathless pace, defeated sixty thousand Russians, removed his old enemy August der Starke from the throne of Poland and placed his own candidate thereupon; and now, flushed with victory, young, erratic, sensationally unpredictable, he was resting on his sword in Saxony.

It seemed probable that he would want some additional fighting before he returned to Sweden. He had the air of a man looking for more worlds to conquer in a hurry. It was

common knowledge that this amazing young man had no love for Austria; and if he began to batter at the north door of the Empire, assuredly Louis, with shouts of glee, would renew his attack from the west. Louis was already making him fancy offers.

It was of the utmost importance to the Allies that Charles the Twelfth be placated. Churchill hurried to Alt Ranstadt.

What a pair they were! Here was one who had been soldiering since his 'teens; who had been cornet, ensign, captain, lieutenant colonel, colonel, major general, brigadier, lieutenant general, commander-in-chief. Facing him was a stripling who had started at the top, a king.

Here was a man who knew every branch of the military service, could command artillery, cavalry, infantry, could direct the movements of fleets, all without making the smallest mistake. And facing him was a general half his age, who never finished anything he started, a military freak, but spectacular and for the moment all-powerful.

Marlborough, even in battle, looked like a fop. Charles the Twelfth, even in court, looked like a hard-bitten campaigner. The king affected rough mannerisms; he was a careless dresser; he scowled, growled; ate coarse foods even when fine food was available; and lived in a tent.

The hero of Blenheim and Ramillies missed none of this. He sighed, when the two were alone, and confided that the greatest regret of his life was that he could not be free to serve for a time under the King of Sweden and learn what he had yet to learn about the art of war.

Charles considered him deserving and appreciative, and thought he might yet go far in the military world. Also Charles agreed not to hurt Austria.

On his way back to Holland the Duke stopped long enough to contract with the Elector of Saxony for 4,500 troops, and to smooth again the ruffled feelings of Frederick of Prussia, who was always angry about something and forever threatening to stop fighting if they didn't treat him better.

These duties completed, the Duke took the field against a Frenchman strange to him, Vendôme, who, though he had almost 100,000 men as compared with the Duke's 80,000, took up a strong position and refused to be budged. None of their tricks should tempt him out! But the Allies were unexpectedly idle. The Duke was very ill; the weather was abominable; nothing could be done until the attack upon Toulon had been launched, and the Emperor, determined to have Naples first, was delaying Eugene.

Under all that granite and gilding in Baden-Baden, old Louis must have smiled in his grave. For the Margrave of Bayreuth was making a mess of matters; the French overran the Rhine country almost at will, easily recovering much of the land Marlborough had won in Germany. One French detachment even got as far as the battlefield of Blenheim, intent upon destroying a monument which, they understood, had been erected there. They were disappointed: there was no monument.

"For God's sake, do not lose any time getting rid of the Margrave," wrote the Duke to Vienna. The Margrave was removed, and Sophia's son, George of Hanover, was appointed to fill the post. *This* appointment Marlborough himself recommended. It is difficult to understand why he had not done so promptly after the death of Louis of Baden; for George,

though not clever, was reliable, and besides, he might be the next King of England.

Things were going very badly. The Allies in Spain, meeting the Franco-Spaniards under Berwick, took a terrific drubbing. This refrightened the Dutch, who had been gradually gaining a modicum of confidence. It also delayed the attack upon Toulon and permitted Berwick to dispatch reënforcements to that seaport.

In the Netherlands there were heavy rains every day —the worst weather natives had known for many years. Vendôme refused to stir. The Duke's headaches were worse, and information from home did nothing to relieve the pain. Some one was whispering to Queen Anne, and the Churchills were slipping lower in Her Majesty's esteem. Sarah's poor relation, Abigail Hill, was close to the Queen, but she could not be suspected of treachery, for she and her mother, her younger sister, and all her brothers, not to mention her husband (for she was now Mrs. Masham), all owed their paying positions to the kindness of Sarah. Yet Abigail Hill had a mysterious manner. One afternoon the Queen sent her into the next room to fetch a pair of gloves she had left there. The poor relation found the Duchess of Marlborough wearing those gloves, and, realizing that she had put them on by mistake, quietly reminded her that they belonged to the Queen. Sarah pulled them off hastily and threw them from her with a gesture of repugnance, crying: "Ugh! have I been touching something that belongs to that odious female!" Abigail Hill made no sign, gave no answer; she knew that Anne, in the next room, had heard every word.

The Duke wrote to Godolphin in explanation of his inactivity: "I cannot venture unless I am certain of success;

for the inclinations in Holland are so strong for peace, that, if we had the least disadvantage, it would make them act very extravagant."

And to Sarah he wrote: "In the army there is all the desire imaginable to venture their lives for the public good; but all other people on this side of the water are so very wise, that I am afraid they will bring us to a bad peace. For my part, I am old, and shall not live to see the misfortune that must happen to Christiandom if the French be suffered to get the better of us in this war." William would have approved that sentiment.

Then Sarah made what she believed to be a great discovery. It was Harley and Bolingbroke, she declared, who were poisoning the Queen against the Marlborough-Godolphin government. She told Godolphin this, but the Lord Treasurer at first had his doubts. For one thing, Sarah was such a fanatical Whig that she suspected every Tory of treachery. For another, both Harley and Bolingbroke owed their positions in the Cabinet to the Duke, and they were kept there only because the Duke had insisted upon their retention.

The two young men themselves vehemently protested their innocence. "I have no thoughts but for the Queen's service and your Lordship's; I have no inclination to any one more than another; I have no animosity to any"—so Harley wrote to Godolphin. And his partner wrote to the Duke: "I have no interest or view but the Queen's service and my gratitude and duty to you, who have tied me to be for ever, my Lord, your Grace's most devoted, faithful, humble friend."

It sounded sincere to Marlborough. But the Lord

Treasurer began to feel dubious. "I doubt so much smoke could not come without some fire," he wrote.

When his Grace of Marlborough received word at last that the attack upon Toulon had been launched, he sprang into action. Careful Vendôme was caught in a bad position, trapped; the Allies closed in. But the States General had been frightened by the setback in Spain. The peace party, too, was getting stronger every day. The citizen deputies played safe and refused to permit a battle. Word came that the attack upon Toulon, which would certainly have been a success had it been launched promptly and with the full Austrian army in Italy, as Marlborough had requested, had failed utterly.

The war season was over, and the Great Duke rode home, sick, disgusted, discouraged, to face an augmenting rabble of enemies and the rising clamor for a separate peace.

CHAPTER TWENTY

Some Additional Laurels

GODOLPHIN, pale as death, met him with a startling announcement: Harley and Bolingbroke must go. There was no longer any doubt about it in the mind of the Lord Treasurer. These fellows had been intriguing with Abigail Hill; they had worked themselves into the confidence of the Queen; they were undermining the influence of the Duke and plotting to finish the war.

The Duke had more than once declared that he would stand or fall by the Lord Treasurer. Still, he was reluctant to put the Tories out of government entirely. He did not want to place all affairs of state in the hands of a single party; and he did not want to anger the Queen. But Godolphin was insistent; and the Duke finally wrote to the Queen: "No consideration can make me serve any longer with that man [Harley]. And I beseech your Majesty to look upon me, from this moment, as *forced out of your service*, as long as you think fit to continue him in it."

Anne liked Harley because Abigail Hill liked him. A little earlier she would have hated him because Sarah hated him. Anyway, the threat to resign was becoming commonplace. Anne refused to dismiss the Tories.

The Cabinet Council met on February 9. Harley was there, and so was Bolingbroke, but Godolphin and Marlborough were absent. There was a long pause. Harley was

very red: he fidgeted in his chair. Finally Somerset said: "I don't see how we can deliberate when the Lord Treasurer and the commander-in-chief are absent." And Anne, furious, broke up the meeting.

The Whigs had won again. Harley and Bolingbroke, seeing that further resistance would be ridiculous, since England could not possibly function without the Duke, resigned. But Anne continued to see them in secret. Sarah wrote later: "To enjoy the gossip, for it could not be called the society, of Mrs. Masham [Abigail Hill], she staid all the sultry season of 1708, even when the Prince was panting for breath, in that small house she had formerly purchased at Windsor, which though hot as an oven was then said to be cool because from the Park such persons as Mrs. Masham had a mind to bring to her Majesty could be let in privately from the garden."

Godolphin had been correct. The remorseless young Tories were systematically poisoning Anne's mind against the commander-in-chief, telling her that Marlborough sought nothing less than complete dictatorship. They were urging her to be a *real* Queen.

This had been going on for a long time: how long we do not know. It took months, perhaps years, to get a thing into Anne's head; it took even longer to get it out again. Harley and Bolingbroke never could have done anything with the Queen if it had not been for Sarah Jennings Churchill, who instead of trying to conciliate Anne heaped angry reproaches upon her, scolding her, screaming at her. Sarah used what remained of her power to get positions for Whigs who were personally and politically obnoxious to the Queen; she financed the publication of pamphlets directed against Anne's friends; she spread vituperation of Abigail Hill; though Anne

repeatedly requested her to send back the Mrs. Morley letters, Sarah, more wildly reckless every day, refused to do so, and even threatened to publish them if the Queen did not dismiss that Hill woman. All this, of course, strengthened Abigail Hill's position, just as previous opposition to Sarah had strengthened Sarah's position. That was the way Anne's mind worked.

That Spring the Baby Stuart, grown up, made another attempt to recover his kingdoms. Some distinguished Scots had banded together into an association pledged to support him if he landed in Scotland with a French army, and King Louis, still a friend of the legitimate line, gave the young man £250,000 besides ships and men.

His friends called him James the Third, his enemies the Pretender, while those who took neither side knew him as the Chevalier de St. George. He was tall and melancholy, an unexciting fellow. When he came of age the first thing he did was to assure the reigning Pope, Clement XI, that "no temptation in the world, and no desire to reign" would ever cause him to leave the Church of St. Peter. He was like his father in this. There was an excellent chance that when Anne died she would endeavor to leave the crowns to him, if he were only willing to wait that long. But he was forever pulling his chances up by the roots to see how they were growing.

When the alarm was spread that another French invasion was imminent, Marlborough took every conceivable precaution, and so effectively blockaded England and Scotland that although young James actually got within sight of the latter nation on two occasions, he was not able to land.

Soon afterwards the Duke went back to war. At the same time Sarah retired to the country.

A frantic call came from Godolphin. Nervous Godolphin! The political situation was worse than ever. The government was close to the rocks. Wouldn't the Duke return to London, on any pretext whatever? The Duke would not. He stuck to his war. And the storm subsided somewhat, leaving the poor little Lord Treasurer all atremble.

On the Rhine, George of Hanover faced a small French army. Eugene faced a larger force, under the Duke of Berwick, in Brabant. And Marlborough faced the largest army under Vendôme in Flanders. All Winter the French had been working with bribes to undo Marlborough's work. The cities of the Spanish Netherlands, under a board of regency chiefly Dutch, were discontented. The Duke probably would have kept them quiet had he been governor; but the Dutch mishandled them so gravely that French spies found ready ears and French coins ready palms. While the commander-in-chief was ill in his tent, the city of Ghent unexpectedly surrendered to the French under Vendôme. Bruges followed suit immediately.

This cut the Allies' water communications in two and would prevent future siege operations on a large scale. Still worse was the reflection that other cities of the Spanish Netherlands would follow this example if they were given half a chance. Marlborough had to watch them all—watch them from a sick bed, while he waited for Eugene—and watch Vendôme, too.

Vendôme was uncommonly active. He had prepared a good plan for clearing Brabant and Flanders of the Allies, and he was carrying it into effect with spirit.

When Eugene finally came, the commander-in-chief rose from a sick bed to greet him, and the two went out looking for a fight. They marched all day, crossed the Scheldt, and came face to face with the enemy under the walls of Oudenarde at four o'clock in the afternoon. They launched an attack without even waiting to form for action, the regiments being thrown into battle as they arrived, one by one. The two armies were nearly equal in strength; the Allies had more artillery, but very little artillery was used anyway, because there was not time to bring it up. Time was all-important. Eugene and Jack Churchill were not going to permit the enemy to escape.

The enemy made no move to escape, but came in gallantly. The right wing of the Allied army, under Eugene, was exposed to terrific fire. They charged again and again. The left wing was beaten back, step by step. Churchill, so ill that he could scarcely hold himself upright in the saddle, went to this wing, rallied the men, and pushed the French back. Foot by foot they fought it out. Eugene, on one side, was dashing wildly from place to place, as though (according to one who saw him that day) he were aide-de-camp to all the generals on the field. The Duke, on the left, was quiet, serene as always, but just as busy. The tricky boxer, forced by necessity, had thrown science to the winds and was standing toe-to-toe with his opponent, slugging like a drunken stevedore. But he did not lose his head. He never did that. The lay of the land permitted him no brilliant plan of battle like those by which he had swept the fields at Blenheim and Ramillies; but he was watchful. Technically Oudenarde was the perfect battle. The French fought marvelously, but, as before, they were outgeneraled. Despite the gloom, a hill far

on the left tip caught the Duke's quick eye: he sent a Dutch detachment to take it. William of Orange must have grinned in his grave (if he ever grinned at all, even there) when the Blue Guards, his favorite regiment, tore down that hill to hurl themselves upon the French in flank.

Darkness had come, but the fighting continued. "The spectacle was magnificent," Eugene wrote in his memoirs. "It was one sheet of flame." At last it was learned that the Allied right and left wing advance guards were firing on one another, and that the French were surrounded. Eugene captured large batches of them by having his drummers beat the French *assemblée,* summoning those soldiers to the wrong place. Many of them escaped, nevertheless. "If I had had two hours more of daylight the war would have been ended," the Duke wrote home.

The French casualties were about 6,000 and 9,000 were taken prisoners. The Allies lost about 4,000.

And now Paris. Why not? Would Vendôme dare to remain in Flanders when the Allies were moving on the French capital? Marlborough had taken care to half-circle the French army in starting for this battle. Like a good chess player, or billiards player, he made each move with the following move in mind. He had forced Vendôme to fight with his back to Antwerp, facing Paris; and now, after the battle, the Allies were between Vendôme and the capital. Ordinarily, even in that position, they would not dare right-about-face for fear Vendôme would fall upon their rear. But Vendôme dared not do so, after the way he had been beaten at Oudenarde. His men were demoralized, his forces not fully assembled, and his command was divided, for not only Berwick was with him now but also the Duke of Burgundy, the Sun King's

grandson, and they were all in disagreement as to what to do —a fact which Marlborough's excellently trained spies had reported to him. Then why not Paris? Why not go straight to Versailles and take Louis prisoner?

The plan was perfectly sound. We know that now. It was a plan upon which Wellington and Blücher were agreed when they met Napoleon on practically the same territory a century later. But 100 years makes a lot of difference. Of course the Dutch deputies objected: that was to be expected. Even so, Eugene and Marlborough could have forced the move, for Eugene spoke for the Emperor as Marlborough spoke for Queen Anne. But this plan was too bold *even for Eugene!* It was the first time the two had failed to agree; there was no hard feeling, for Marlborough gave in rather than have any friction.

The course they did take, instead of the dash to Paris, was almost as bold. They besieged Lille.

Lille was Vauban's masterpiece, probably the strongest city in the world. Inside was Marshal Bouflers, no strategist but a stubborn fighter; and he had 15,000 good men under him. All the water communications were broken because of the betrayal of Ghent. It seemed impossible that Eugene and Marlborough, great soldiers as they were, could take Lille. But against apparently insurmountable difficulties they brought up a siege train—120 heavy field pieces, forty mortars, twenty howitzers, and some 3,500 ammunition wagons. Eugene, with about 40,000 men, directed the siege proper, while the Duke, with about 60,000, undertook to cover it, holding off Berwick on one side and Vendôme on the other.

He was tired. Fifty-eight years old, he craved peace and a long-postponed return to the hedgerows and lazy humming

of bees in Axminster. He was weary of fighting, weary of bargaining with princes and margraves and grand dukes on the Continent, and with suspicious, self-seeking politicians at home. A dozen times he could have ended the war if they had only permitted him. All he sought now was an opportunity to wage the last battle and bring Louis finally to his knees. He had enough glory, perhaps too much. He even had enough money. He prayed nightly for an honorable peace, "and then," he wrote to Godolphin, "I may have what I most earnestly wish for—quiet." His personal letters at this time, not only to Godolphin and Sarah, but to other friends as well, are filled with references to his desire for a suspension of hostilities. He had been fighting, in court, in camp, in council, on the field, for eight years—day and night, Spring, Summer, Fall, and Winter, without let up, without any chance to rest. He was tired.

But he was alert. Vendôme, eager to join Berwick and raise the siege, moved to do this—and Jack Churchill moved between them. Vendôme and Berwick moved around to the other side of the city—but Churchill was there first. Now the Duke was not trying to prevent them from joining, as they and the rest of the world supposed: he was simply shifting to cause them to join at the spot he had selected for them. In time, accommodatingly, they did so. They faced him, 110,000 strong. Churchill had less than 70,000, but he was in a strong defensive position, selected in advance. He formed for battle.

Berwick, Burgundy, and Vendôme conferred, reconnoitered, conferred again, while *Le Bel Anglais* strengthened his position and brought up reënforcements from Eugene's besieging army. The superb confidence shown by the English

commander in the face of such odds disconcerted his enemies. They backed away.

You would suppose that Jack Churchill exhaled in relief? Not at all. Greatly outnumbered though he was, he saw that in retreating as they did the French left themselves open to attack, and he wanted to go after them then and there. Of course the Dutch deputies intervened. But Berwick himself later admitted that his uncle would have won a great victory if permitted to attack that day.

The siege of Lille continued. The engineering work on the part of the defenders was beautiful, on the part of the attacking force deplorable. "Everything goes wrong," the Duke wrote to his wife. He was discouraged. In other years he had taken every city he had besieged, but it looked now as if this, the greatest siege of modern times, was going to fail. He admitted as much to Sarah: "These are my views, but I desire you will let nobody know them. I long extremely to have this campaign well ended, for of all the campaigns I have made, it has been the most painful; but I am in the galley, and must row as long as this war lasts."

Eugene's hat was shot off, his wig with it. But he stayed in front line trenches. A bullet grazed his right forehead. "That was a lucky hit," he commented, and wiping off the blood he went on fighting. But the wound weakened him and brought on a fever; and he was obliged, even he, to take to his bed. This threw both tasks—covering the siege and conducting it—upon the Duke, himself a sick man. He would rise at dawn every day, reconnoiter the French position to be sure that all was in readiness against a surprise move, hear the reports of his spies and scouts as he rode to Lille, supervise operations for the day, and hurry back in time for another

QUEEN ANNE

From the original of Kneller. Engraved by J. Cochran

look at the enemy before dark. At night, stretched out in his cot, he would dictate letters—to Sarah, to Godolphin, to the Queen, to numberless kings, princes, dukes, generals, politicians; he would receive reports, give commands for the following day, arrange for commissions, supplies, contracts, safe-conducts. After that he made his prayers; and then if there was any time left, he slept a little.

Eventually, at the command of King Louis himself, Bouflers sent Eugene the terms under which he would surrender. Eugene, well again, signed the terms without reading them. "Bouflers can demand nothing that he should not ask, nor I grant," said Eugene. Bouflers invited the prince to dinner in the citadel, served him with horse meat, and regretted that he had no other foods: "We've been living on this for some time." Eugene took him and his principal officers down into the town and treated them to a good dinner. "I congratulate myself on having taken Lille," said Eugene to Bouflers, "but I should have preferred having defended it as you have done."

The Allies lost 15,000 men in that siege, which was bloodier than most battles.

But a tremendous advantage had been gained. The Allies were on French soil, had besieged and taken the strongest French fortress, and had successfully held off the greatest French army. To be sure, the Bavarians were besieging Brussels; but the Allies had accomplished enough for one season, and the Duke moved toward Winter quarters.

Then suddenly the Duke wheeled at right angles, swooped upon Brussels, sent the Bavarians flying, and before the French had a chance to catch their breath had laid siege to Ghent, which he retook; to Bruges, another traitor city,

which he also retook; and to Plassendael and Leffinghen, both of which he soon captured. It was altogether unprecedented! The war season had been ended months earlier, yet here in January was this insatiable Englishman still fighting! He did not stop until zero weather set in.

Again the Emperor offered him the governorship of the sadly mismanaged Spanish Netherlands, fixing the salary at £60,000 a year for life. Again Churchill refused. He would not be sidetracked. "My spirit is so broke that I am fit for nothing but a lazy and quiet life," he told Godolphin. How Louis the Fourteenth wished he could believe that!

Things were going very badly with Louis the Fourteenth, not only on the field but at home. It was a terrible Winter, the coldest Winter natives had ever known. France, beaten, starving, impoverished, desperately needed peace. The Sun King had long been trying to win over the Dutch, but Marlborough had blocked him. He had tried to break Marlborough politically, but the Duke had successfully withstood him. He had tried many times to bribe the Duke, but without getting even an answer. So he sued for peace. He offered to give up Spain if the Allies would leave his grandson the two Sicilies, then a part of the Spanish domain. He offered to give up the Spanish Netherlands and all the Spanish possessions in the West Indies.

The Allies made their reply through Marlborough. It was: Every inch of Spain; the expulsion of the Chevalier de St. George from the French dominions and the recognition of Anne as Queen of Great Britain and Ireland; the dismantling of the fortifications at Dunkirk, that thorn in the side of naval England; Strassburg, Landau, Lille, and other

important cities to be turned over to the Allies as securities that Louis would keep his word.

Torcy, the French minister of war, knew that Marlborough was the one man who could soften those terms if he wished. Again and again Torcy informed the Duke that Louis was willing to pay the sum of £80,000 if the Duke would spare even so much as Naples, and twice that sum for the two Sicilies, Strassburg, Landau, and Dunkirk. Each time the Duke changed the conversation.

Marlborough has been called grasping, avaricious. It is questionable whether there were five public men in all Europe at that time who would have refused a bribe of £160,000.

Louis knew that he was beaten. But the Allies asked too much: they demanded that Louis request his own grandson to leave Spain, with the understanding that if the grandson refused to abdicate, Louis himself should take the field against him.

The grandson would inevitably refuse to abdicate. Louis had previously warned him that he might be asked to step down from the throne, but Philip, who rather liked being a king, had replied: "God has placed the crown of Spain upon my head, and while I have a drop of blood in my veins I will fight to keep it there."

Philip might well have been a little less grandiose about it. Louis, not God, had placed that crown upon his head. But Philip was at last an independent king; no longer were Frenchmen fighting his battles for him; his army was all Spanish now, and if he refused to abdicate his grandfather could not force him to do so, even for the sake of peace.

"If I must fight," said the Sun King, "I would rather fight against my enemies than against my own children."

Like Churchill, he was tired. But, again like Churchill, he would not make what he believed to be a dishonorable peace. For the first time in his reign of more than fifty years, he appealed directly to his people. He issued a proclamation, making known the peace terms and his reasons for refusing them; in fact, he pointed out, he was offered not even peace, but only a truce; and although he himself would be called upon to give heavy securities, there was no clause which would prevent the Allies from keeping those securities and restarting the war if Philip would not budge from his throne in Spain. The result of this was amazing. The French, battered, half-starved, half-frozen, rallied to their king with heads erect and hearts ready. The whole nation, with tremendous effort, raised itself into an army of more than 100,000, melted its plate, gave up its last sou from the bottom of the sock, and prepared once more to meet the terrible Duke of Marlborough.

CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

Mr. Harley's Methods

ALL the other marshals had failed to stop the madman. Perhaps Villars could do it. Bouflers, Villeroi, Marsin, Tallard, Burgundy, Berwick, Vendôme—each, pitted against the Great Duke, had gone down to defeat. But Villars, untroubled, gathered about him the ragged, shivering fellows who composed France's last hope, patted down the curlicues of his periwig, and stated to Louis: "Sire, I am going to drive your enemies so far that they shall not again see the banks of the Scheldt."

That was Villars. A tall, fat soldier, with a double chin and haughty eyes, he had perfect confidence in himself. When anything went wrong, he would shrug and say: "Villars can't be everywhere." He always spoke of himself like that, in the third person, as if he were a ruling monarch. Yet, pompous as he was, and stupendously conceited, he was a crack commander. He had been defeated only once, and that at Walcourt, where the fault was not his. He had advised against the rash French attack at Walcourt, and when Churchill had turned Louis's troops in that magnificent counter-attack, it was Villars who had saved the French from utter destruction. For this he had been made a marshal, and since then he had been consistently successful. But since then he had never met Jack Churchill again.

The Duke moved directly toward Villars. The double-

chinned fellow dug in where he was, smiling grimly; he recalled his outposts and foraging parties, for he needed every man. Then one night the Allies abruptly twisted in their course; they appeared, 120,000 strong, under the walls of Tournay at seven o'clock the next morning.

Villars, annoyed, explained to Louis that his men were starving: "One accustoms oneself to almost everything, but I believe the habit of not eating is not very easily acquired."

The siege of Tournay was, according to Eugene, "the most terrible subterraneous war that I ever witnessed." In twenty-six days the enemy sprang thirty-eight mines, and the Allies lost some 5,000 men. The trenches were opened July 7, and the white flag was run up on August 21.

Next Eugene and Marlborough moved on Mons. Villars intercepted them at Malplaquet.

It was a strong position. The French occupied woods on left and right, and the lay of the land was such that the French reserves were able to maneuver out of sight of the enemy. The Allies came, looked, and paused. It was the first time Jack Churchill had ever paused before a fight. He was, to be sure, waiting for reënforcements. But he was also losing his confidence: he admitted as much in his personal letters at this time. He was getting old; he was not well; the political situation at home worried him. And he was having more trouble with Sarah. She had demanded that he write the Queen a letter requesting her own reinstatement as favorite; Sarah was missing the old power and was trying now, in her wild fashion, to reëstablish herself. Her husband saw no purpose in sending such a letter. He knew Anne better than Sarah knew her. "It would have no other effect than that of being shown to Mrs. Masham," he wrote. But since she in-

sisted, he penned the letter, and even sent it back to England for her and Godolphin to read over and correct, before he dispatched it to the Queen. For, as he explained to his wife in a letter written the day he paused before Villars: "though the fate of Europe if these armies engage may depend upon the good or bad success, yet your uneasiness gives me much greater trouble."

The next night he added a postscript: "I am so tired that I have but strength enough to tell you that we have had this day a very bloody battle; the first part of the day we beat their foot and afterwards their horse. God Almighty be praised it is now in our power to have what peace we please, and I may be pretty well assured of never being in another battle, but that, nor anything else in the world, can make me happy if you are not kind."

Unlike other generals, he was not given to exaggerating accounts of his successes; but he seems to have done so here, probably unknowingly. For although Malplaquet was a victory for the Allies, it was not a great victory, and it was a very costly one. On the Allies left, the young Prince of Orange disobeyed orders and charged—with horrible results. Marlborough and Eugene pushed forward at center and right, and from the woods came a stream of flame: there seemed to be five Frenchmen behind every tree. Eugene was wounded over the right ear, but he went on fighting. Villars, too, was wounded. A bullet caught him above his left knee. Unable to remain on horseback, he had himself carried from place to place in a sedan chair, and continued to direct the fighting until he fainted from pain.

Stout old Bouflers, who had been in charge of the French right, succeeded to the command then, and, slow thinker

though he was, it seemed for a while that he was going to manage to hold the Allies, who outnumbered the French about 100,000 to 80,000. The field at Malplaquet required neither a great strategist nor a great tactician. What it did call for was a great fighter, and Bouflers was that. But then, so was Jack Churchill.

The French retreated, but the Allies were too tired to give chase. Most of the men dropped where they were, utterly exhausted. Eugene retired to his tent to have his wound treated. The commander-in-chief, weak from loss of sleep, sickness, and his exertions in the battle, took charge of the work of tending the wounded—until the continued sight of these poor devils caused him to collapse. This was the man whose name, mispronounced as many ways as there were languages in Europe, caused peasants to tremble and cross themselves, sent kings and emperors sleepless to bed, and was used by nurses as a bogey with which to frighten children into good behavior. This was the same man who, when he was the lover of Barbara Palmer, had jumped out of a window when the King surprised him in her bedroom; the man who, sword in hand, had saved Monmouth's life in the attack on the half-moon at Maestricht; who had endured battle and siege, sea fight and shipwreck, disgrace and imprisonment, with an unruffled smile and a voice that was never raised. It was the same man who now fainted at the sight of blood.

Blenheim, Ramillies, and Oudenarde had spoiled the English people, and Malplaquet was regarded not as a victory but almost as a defeat. The Allies' losses, close to 20,000, were far greater than those of the French. Half the Allies' casualties were Dutchmen who had charged in direct disobedience of the commander-in-chief, but the Duke was

blamed just the same. Villars's position had been exceptionally strong, and it is improbable that even Churchill would have tried to dislodge him had not the political situation forced him to do so. Frequently he had been forbidden to attack when attack, in his opinion, would have been sweepingly successful; but now the very persons who had caused him to act against his own better judgment were arraigning him as a "barbarous butcher" and shouting loudly that all those lives had been sacrificed to private avarice and ambition.

Villars wrote characteristically to King Louis: "A few more 'defeats' like this, and Your Majesty will be able to dictate his own terms for the peace." The letter was much quoted in England.

The Allied cause had gone badly elsewhere. The Duke of Savoy, annoyed by something the Emperor had done or had failed to do, refused to fight. George of Hanover had been driven back on the Rhine. The generals in Spain, still squabbling, did nothing. And the Allies in Portugal were beaten.

Jack Churchill returned wearily to fresh trouble. Not only Sarah now, but Godolphin as well, was mishandling affairs at home. A Jacobite preacher published a sermon bitterly reproaching the Lord Treasurer, and Godolphin had the poor taste to have the fellow arraigned before the House of Lords on a libel charge. The preacher, Henry Sacheverel, was a fashionable High Churchman. His trial lasted three weeks, and the people took his side because they imagined him an under dog. Sacheverel, found guilty, was forbidden to preach again for three years. Like Malplaquet, this was technically a victory for the government, but actually a defeat.

Then there was the Shrewsbury affair. The Duke of Shrewsbury, a powerful Tory, was growing more powerful every day. He liked Jack Churchill personally and had always been one of his best friends. But when Shrewsbury married his mistress, and Sarah took it upon herself to snub the lady, Shrewsbury was understandably furious and from that day was a bitter enemy of the commander-in-chief.

Not Sarah, but death, took another faithful friend. This was the Generalissimo of the British Armies, the Chief Lord High Admiral of the British Navy, Baron Wokingham, the Earl of Kendal, the Duke of Cumberland, Warden of the Cinque Ports, Constable of Dover Castle, Knight of the Garter, Chevalier of the Order of St. George, Chevalier of the Order of St. Andrew, Prince Consort of England, Scotland, and Ireland—in brief, drunken old George of Denmark, who succumbed quietly on October 28, 1709.

Sarah was present; and the Queen, turning from the deathbed, quite naturally found herself weeping on a familiar shoulder—one so much softer, so much more comforting than that of Abigail Hill! For once, Sarah was altogether kindly and thoughtful. She led the Queen away and comforted her with quiet words.

Perhaps this would lead to a reconciliation? No, Sarah would not permit that. Promptly after Anne's grief had subsided, Sarah began making haughty demands upon her —demands to which Anne would once have said yes. But no longer. When Sarah began again to scold and rant, Anne turned away.

Jack Churchill went back to war. "I must every Summer venture my life in a battle and be found fault with in the Winter for not bringing home peace though I wish for it

with all my heart and soul," he wrote to a friend. Troubled chiefly with the thought that his military position might be snatched from him before his work was done, he ventured to petition the Queen to make him Captain General of the British Forces at Home and Abroad—*for life!*

We can easily understand why he wanted the appointment, but it is difficult to understand how he could have been so foolish as to ask Anne for it at such a time. Earlier, she would have granted it to him without hesitation. But Sarah's influence, and George's too, were gone, and the Queen had been listening for a long time to the insidious talk of Mr. Harley, retailed by Abigail Hill. She refused to grant the petition.

It would not have been so bad if the matter had ended there. But the Duke's enemies swooped upon that request with delight, and soon they were waving it back and forth across England like a flag. It gave sting to their arguments that the Duke was trying to establish a dictatorship.

Disappointed, discouraged, disgusted, Churchill was on the field early, joined Eugene, and besieged Douai. It was a tough nut, but they cracked it. Then they went after Bethune. Villars, with France's last hope, did not dare meet them unless he had a favorable position for battle, and this they were too wary to permit him, maneuver as he would.

If the Duke was overcautious that year, as some have asserted, it was because political blows were pounding upon him steadily, relentlessly, like the strokes of a trip-hammer.

The Earl of Sunderland was abruptly dismissed, and a Tory was given his post in the cabinet. The Duke disliked Sunderland, his own son-in-law, though in order to please the Whigs he had forced the fellow's appointment with a

threat of resignation. But when Anne demanded Sunderland's resignation (with Harley chuckling in the background) the Whigs, hitherto most officious, submitted quietly. Godolphin and most of the party leaders drew up a petition begging the Duke not to resign his command, and the Lord Treasurer also persuaded the Dutch and Austrian envoys in London to protest against what appeared to be the beginning at this critical juncture of the ministry's overthrow. He did this against the advice of Churchill, who knew that it would only serve to increase the fervor of the Queen's Toryism.

Then came a demand from Anne that John Hill, Abigail's brother, and Masham, her husband, be given regiments to lead. She had never before interfered with Marlborough's department. He disliked and distrusted the two young men and had little respect for their ability. But Godolphin begged him not to protest, and he took Godolphin's advice.

He might better have disregarded the timid little Lord Treasurer, who was losing his head altogether now, in a real crisis.

Sarah, too, went on making matters worse with her incessant railing. "For God's sake keep your temper," the Duke wrote to her, "for you are in a country amongst tigers and wolves." But she flew screaming down the old path. She renewed the Morley-Freeman correspondence, her own letters getting longer and more vituperative while Anne's grew shorter and colder, until Anne ended the thing by refusing to reply at all.

Marlborough and Eugene took Bethune and laid siege to Aire. The Allies in Spain, after winning a glorious victory at Zaragoza, occupied Madrid. But the Archduke Charles, the Deliverer whom they were delivering, was received there

in dead silence; and soon afterwards Philip borrowed Marshal Vendôme from his grandfather and drove the Allies out, being himself received back into Madrid with wild acclamations.

Marlborough and Eugene took Aire and laid siege to St. Venant. But elsewhere, an attempt to persuade the French Protestants of the Cevennes to rise against King Louis was a complete failure, the Allies losing about fifty men and the French only one—who was killed accidentally.

Then Godolphin was dismissed. Anne, to whom money meant nothing, but who seemed to think (and not without reason) that it meant everything to other persons, offered him a pension of £4,000 a year, which he refused, and asked him to break his staff of office over his knee rather than return it to her. Anne dreaded scenes of dismissal; they made her cry.

The Lord Treasurer's office was not filled, but Harley was made Chancellor of the Exchequer, which amounted to the same thing under the circumstances. Tories were oozing into the cabinet. After Harley, inevitably, came Bolingbroke, who was made Secretary of State. Harley's friend, Earl Rivers, was dispatched to Hanover on some trumped-up mission; his real assignment was to suggest that Elector George, who was known to be jealous of Marlborough's military glory, take over the commander-in-chief's job. But George and his mother, shrewd and quiet as ever, refused to commit themselves.

Marlborough and Eugene took St. Venant, and quit for the season. It had been an unexciting but important campaign. The French had been driven back to their last line of fortresses, in their own country; they were desperately

engaged in strengthening those fortresses, under the watchful eye of Villars, all that Winter.

Parliament met in November, strongly Tory. The Duke, like France, was fighting with his back to the last available wall. Obviously the only thing for him to do was to make peace with his old friends the Tories. He had always inclined toward that party, though he cared little which party was in power so long as it did not interfere with his war. The Tories, for the most part, would be willing enough to take him in, "if," as Bolingbroke said, "he comes home and disengages himself from the Whigs, and if he puts a stop to the rage and fury of his wife."

Shaking himself free of the Whigs would be no hard task: he had never liked them very much. But stopping Sarah was another matter. The Duke could stop a cavalry charge, but not Sarah.

He came back late in December, and the people in the streets cheered him encouragingly. Anne told him: "I am desirous you should continue to serve me and will answer for the conduct of all my ministers towards you." But she warned him not to expect the customary vote of thanks from Parliament for his services that year.

There were hand-shakings and back-slappings. In his most polished manner, Jack Churchill pooh-poohed the ravings of his wife. He admitted that Sarah had acted "strangely." But, he added, smiling in a knowing manner: "A man must bear with a good deal to be quiet at home."

Queen Anne called for Sarah's Gold Key of office. Sarah, though she no longer went to court, was still Keeper of the Privy Purse, Mistress of the Robes, and Groom of the Stole. She refused to give up the Key. Her husband in vain pulled

every string he controlled, and finally went before the Queen personally. He pleaded. "The Key—I must have the Key," said Anne doggedly. She had never refused him anything before: he dropped to his knees and kissed her two plump hands. "The Key," muttered the Queen. She seemed physically unable to say anything else; she had been coached for the scene precisely as a stupid witness is coached by a lawyer before taking the stand. The Duke rose, gathered his dignity about him, bowed sadly, and departed. It required all the courage a lifetime of warfare had lent him to go back to Sarah and report failure. Sarah threw the Gold Key at him. "*Do whatever you want with it!*" He sent it back to the Queen. Abigail Hill was given the Privy Purse, the Duchess of Somerset the other two offices.

Sarah wrote another bitter letter to Anne and reminded her that nine years before she, Sarah, had refused to accept an offer to raise her various allowances. The Duchess carefully computed how much the sum would have amounted to if she had accepted this offer. Anne, without comment, sent her all the money.

Since she was no longer an official of the royal household, Sarah was ordered to vacate her apartments in St. James's. She boiled over again. She took all the furniture with her; she even ordered the workingmen to rip the brass locks from the doors and tear out the marble mantelpieces. Queen Anne snapped back with a threat to cancel the contracts for Blenheim Palace, which was still under construction. "I will build no house for the Duke of Marlborough when the Duchess has pulled mine to pieces," cried Anne.

Poor Jack Churchill! He had been striving with might and main to keep out of politics as much as possible. William's

ghost, like William, was interested only in winning a war, not at all in the bickerings of courtiers. But now all he had accomplished in eight hard years was in danger of obliteration because two foolish women could not control their tempers. Heinsius, the Grand Pensionary of the States General, Prince Eugene, and other loyal friends, wrote begging him not to resign because of Sarah's overthrow. For the business meant a lot to him. It was precisely as if Harley personally had slapped him in the face. It had the same effect upon his feelings and upon the feelings of the public toward him.

But he swallowed the insult. After all, the most important thing was that King Louis be brought to his knees.

Harley chuckled, renewing his activities. He was in secret communication with King Louis and preparing to have England betray her allies. An unofficial ambassador asked Torcy if France would like to have peace. "It was like asking a sick man if he wishes to recover," Torcy commented. Negotiations were begun, Louis was offered better terms than he had dared for many years to expect. He saw that Holland was no longer the weakest link in the chain. He was up to his old trick of offering the best terms to the first member of the Grand Alliance which would consent to leave the others in the lurch, and Tory England seemed most anxious to win the prize.

The House of Commons voted £6,000,000 for the conduct of the war. There at least the Duke was successful. But at the same time Parliament created a commission with large and vague powers to investigate war funds. In modern politics these commissions are familiar; but they were new in Churchill's day. This particular one was all Tory. It could be used as a club against the Duke at any time; for nobody

doubted that such a body could find, somewhere in the millions and millions of pounds poured into the war, at least one stream not indicated on the commander's maps.

With this Damoclean threat dangling over him, Jack Churchill went back to war.

CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO

The Old Master

MARLBOROUGH is now a man rowing a boat which is leaking fast. He must get to shore before the boat sinks, for the water about him is thick with sharks. The shore was Paris, the boat the Allied army. The sharks, which became more numerous every hour, were men who had previously addressed the Great Duke only in awed whispers and now sneered openly at him.

As early as in the first week in March he was back on the Continent. Paris must be taken. Villars had been working all Winter on France's last wall of defense. Anticipating a fellow countryman with the cry "*Ils ne passeront pas!*" from the Channel to the Meuse he had constructed a series of fortifications which he himself declared to be perfect. Perhaps they were; certainly they were as near to perfection as a great military mind could make them. Villars called them his *non plus ultra* lines. He was prepared to admit that the Duke of Marlborough was a very great general, probably the second greatest general in the world; but even the Duke of Marlborough, said Villars, could not penetrate these lines.

The Allies had, or should have had, a decidedly superior force in the Netherlands at the beginning of that campaign. The Great Duke was feverishly anxious to begin operations as early as possible, but an exceptionally late Spring worked against him. The German troops were later still. Spectacular

young Charles of Sweden had at last been defeated—at Pultowa by Peter the Great—and Hanover, Denmark, Holstein, and Saxony, all eager to pounce upon him while he was down, were consequently reluctant to supply the forces promised to Marlborough. Frederick of Prussia made his annual complaint, and this time, despite the Great Duke's flattery, really withdrew his forces. The Palatinate troops were not delivered at all. Eugene was a month late because of difficulties made by the Emperor; and a few days after Eugene did arrive, he was called back again with all his men.

The reason for that was the death of Emperor Joseph. Since Joseph was childless, Archduke Charles was now in line for the succession; and Charles, deeming a slippery Peninsular throne far less desirable than the Hapsburg seat at Vienna, left Spain and the Allied forces there to get along as best they could without him. The war had been started, ostensibly, to give Charles a throne, but now Charles had a throne of his own. He called back Eugene because there was talk of a revolt among the minor states under his newly acquired jurisdiction.

To make matters even worse, meddlers at home sent an expedition to Quebec, and so drew off another large portion of the Duke's army. It was a ridiculous plan; the capture of Quebec could not possibly benefit England at the time, and by taking Paris the English could afterward annex Quebec or any other French possession they desired. The Duke advised against this expedition, but his advice was ignored. John Hill, Abigail's brother, was in command. The expedition was a disastrous failure.

By the time the Duke was able to move out into the field, he had fewer men under his command than Villars.

Villars was no fool; he had studied his opponent's methods, as a good general should; and he moved back and forth behind his *non plus ultra* lines with amazing speed. In spite of his numerical superiority, he would not risk a battle. His assignment was to hold back the Duke: the English Tories, Louis knew, would do the rest in London.

The *non plus ultra* lines—Jack Churchill studied them carefully. Two points, Arras and Bouchain, would open straight roads to Paris. They were about twenty-five miles apart as the crow flies, but not as an army marches. And Villars, watching him like a cat, would be guarding those two points with particular vigilance.

He might feint at one, then descend upon the other. He might feint a feint, or even execute this movement three times: it can be repeated indefinitely, as any fencer will assure you. But a few preliminary passes quickly convinced him that Villars was not going to be fooled by such dodges. Something new was necessary. Were there any tricks left in the old bag?

Arras and Bouchain. . . . The former was perhaps the more exposed, but very strong. Bouchain could be taken if the triangular piece of ground formed by the juncture of the Scheldt and the Sensee were taken first. But it appeared impossible to cross the Scheldt and get into that triangle before Villars arrived. The fortifications at Arleux would prevent it, if nothing else. Now the Duke could easily take Arleux, itself a petty place, and destroy those fortifications. But Villars would be there and waiting before the Allies could cross the river; and if the Duke doubled back toward Arras in a feint, the Frenchman, perceiving his real purpose, would

probably answer the feint, but would also take the trouble to refortify Arleux.

On the other hand, Arras seemed impregnable. To attack at Arras would mean a terrible slaughter and probably failure. To attack at Bouchain, it seemed, would mean a terrible slaughter and certain failure.

The *non plus ultra* lines! The Great Duke moved toward Bouchain. Villars, not an hour behind, marched parallel with him. The Great Duke swooped upon Arleux and captured the place. Across the river, drawn up in battle array, Villars waited. But the Duke made no move to cross the Scheldt; instead he strengthened the fortifications at Arleux, and then suddenly made a dash for Arras. And Villars, moving parallel with him also, marched toward Arras.

Why had the Duke taken the trouble not only to strengthen Arleux but also to post a large garrison there? It was part of some plan not yet evident; and wise Villars detached a strong force from his main army and sent this racing back to storm and take the place.

Just northwest of Arras, when he heard this, the Great Duke swore furiously, stamping up and down in his tent, refusing to see any one. It was unlike him. His officers could not remember when he had appeared to be so angry as he was when he learned that Arleux had been retaken. Spies, of course, reported this to Villars.

The Duke seemed to have lost his head entirely. He cried that he would "be even with Villars for this." Evidently his feint had failed, for here was Villars facing him at Arras. Well, if attack he must, attack he would—and let science be thrown to the winds. Politics at home were pressing him. He *must* break those lines, whatever the cost.

Villars grinned. So the old fox had lost his cunning? Villars was a crafty fellow himself; and when it became evident that the Duke of Marlborough was really going to make a direct attack upon Arras, Villars called in all his outposts, all his garrisons from petty fortresses—not forgetting Arleux. Probably whatever plan the old Englishman had been toying with when he strengthened that place had been spoiled now. Even so, Villars took no chances. Before the French garrison vacated Arleux it flattened the fortifications there.

In the Allied army there was consternation. The men in the ranks, though ignorant of technical strategy, are usually either blindly confident or blindly suspicious of the general who moves them. It is precisely as a carriage horse knows, even though he cannot see out of the back of his head, when another person has taken the reins. The Duke had always inspired his men with his own perfect confidence, without ever doing anything democratic or picturesque in front of them. They *knew* he was right. But now they were dismayed, believing with Villars that the old fox had lost his cunning after all, and was about to launch an attack upon a virtually impregnable position.

They were still more worried when he sent off a strong detachment to besiege some petty place along the line. On the eve of a great battle this was sheer insanity.

Then the Duke lightened his army, sending all the artillery back toward Douai. He would fight Villars without hindrance of great guns. He was risking everything upon one throw of the dice; and Villars, who had full information about the situation in London, shook his head sadly when he

reflected how politics could rob a soldier of all his senses. For this Marlborough had been a clever man in his day.

That evening there was the breathless hush that precedes a battle. Every possible preparation had been made: it only remained to fight it out. Villars's spies brought information that *Le Bel Anglais* had given final instructions to his officers, had placed the surgeons where they could best tend the wounded, had called in all his outposts and foraging parties, and was obviously going to attack early in the morning. All right, let him come! Villars was ready.

But at eleven o'clock that night there was another piece of news. The Allies were gone! They had folded their tents and departed, heading eastward toward Bouchain. Villars broke his own camp promptly and started after them.

The Allies marched magnificently. Suddenly the men had realized that the Duke knew what he was doing after all. He had never failed them yet: every battle he had fought had been a victory, every siege he had conducted had resulted in the capture of the place besieged, even his minor maneuvers were invariably successful. He knew his business, that old man!

The Scarpe? Villars had counted upon it to delay them. But when they reached the Scarpe, they found there the force ostensibly sent out to take some petty fortress, but actually, they saw now, an advanced guard assigned to lay pontoon bridges. They crossed the Scarpe without any delay.

The Allies covered thirteen leagues in eighteen hours, each man carrying a load of fifty pounds over abominable roads. They marched all night and all the next day, singing as they went.

Villars had figured that he could, at the very worst, cut

off the Duke's artillery, which could not possibly be transported as fast as the men could march, and without which a siege of Bouchain could not be conducted. But the artillery, sent back toward Douai in what appeared to be a desperate gesture, has meanwhile cut southwest toward Arleux.

Arleux! There was the key to the whole scheme. When the Allies crossed the Scheldt at Arleux there was nothing to stop them, for the fortifications had been torn down. Villars himself had torn them down.

The Allies took that triangular piece of ground and invested Bouchain. Villars himself, now blocked from Bouchain by the Sensee, could do nothing but stand by and gnash his teeth for six weeks until the city fell. By then it was too late and too cold for even *Le Bel Anglais* to move armies again that year. But the *non plus ultra* lines had been pierced without the loss of a single man, and the road to Paris was open.

CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE

Dropping the Pilot

CHURCHILL went back to London. He had been corresponding with Harley and Bolingbroke in an effort to persuade them to let him go on fighting a little longer—just a little longer. They had praised his work, promising all possible coöperation; they appeared to be very friendly. But when he met them again he perceived that their protestations of friendship had been a mask. They had committed themselves to a separate peace—not publicly to the people, or even to Parliament, but privately to the King of France—and the one person who might be able to block them was the Great Duke.

The Great Duke must go. His time had come. There was no point in asking him to acquiesce in the shameful peace they proposed, for again and again he had refused to consider it. So they resorted to characteristic methods.

That Parliamentary investigating commission submitted a secret report announcing that £35,000,000 of the money appropriated for the war in the past eight years was unaccounted for. The Duke's friends answered this fully before the Duke himself even heard of it. The investigators dived back into their sewer of figures, and emerged, blinking, with another startling statement: £63,000 had been paid privately to the commander-in-chief by contractors for bread and bread wagons. This interesting information was to be kept

secret and used only in an emergency; but the Duke heard about it and informed the commission that the £63,000 was no more than an established perquisite of office, granted to the commander-in-chief long before Jack Churchill himself had taken over that job—in fact, even before the Revolution of 1688.

The indefatigable investigators dived again, and this time when they came up it was with a third startling announcement: two and one-half per cent. of all the money England had put out for foreign auxiliaries during the war, or £280,000, had gone to the commander-in-chief.

He admitted that this was true, but reminded the commissioners that William had arranged for this when Churchill was first appointed, that all the kings and grand dukes of the auxiliary powers had agreed to it in writing before the war and had registered no objection since then, and that Queen Anne herself had issued a royal warrant authorizing it before the commander-in-chief had taken the field. The money, the Duke explained, was used for secret service—in other words, spies. Because of the nature of this work, all funds devoted to it were placed in the hands of the commander-in-chief, to insure complete secrecy.

That should have silenced the commission. Even a lawyer would have nothing further to say under such circumstances. But a desperate politician cannot be silenced. The commissioners demanded proof that all this money had been spent on spies.

It was nonsense, of course. The Duke had controlled the greatest spy system the world had ever known. His information about enemy movements was uniformly excellent. He would not have been able to trick the French again and again

had it not been for the assistance of well-paid agents operating inside the enemy's lines. The royal warrant, signed by the Queen and countersigned by a Tory secretary of state, authorized him to spend this money as he saw fit. Those close to him on the field asserted that he probably used much more than £280,000 in secret service work. But obviously he could not give up his accounts, for that would be to play false to all the men who had supplied him with information at the risk of their own lives.

In law there was no case against Churchill. But the Harley-Bolingbroke faction did not need that; they never moved to bring formal impeachment proceedings against him. They only wanted to blacken his reputation in order to weaken his influence while they put through a separate peace.

He answered every charge fully and completely. He had good legal authority for everything he had done. But the public reads and believes sensational charges made against great men, and rarely reads or believes the answers. The mud had been thrown; it would stick as long as was necessary. And the old cry that the Duke was prolonging the war because it meant money to him was dragged from the dustbin and put back into circulation. Of all the charges it was the most unjust, as the great mass of the Duke's private correspondence, covering the war years, will attest. Yet of all the charges, it was perhaps the most commonly believed.

The Whigs were desperate, outnumbered in both houses of Parliament, out of the Cabinet altogether, out of public favor, and with no standing in the Queen's household. There was only one chance to block the separate peace which Harley and his associates were trying to bring about. Though the House of Commons was overwhelmingly Tory, in the Lords

the two parties were more nearly balanced. A few Tory Lords could turn the trick; and a few Tory Lords, discontented with the way Harley and Bolingbroke were running things, were not difficult to find. Lord Nottingham was willing to desert his party if the Whigs would support his Occasional Conformity bill. It was opposed to Whig principles: but the Whigs would agree to anything to save the boat from sinking before it reached shore, and Nottingham had a large following.

Parliament met December 7, and Queen Anne said it was time for peace, "notwithstanding the arts of those who delight in war." Everybody looked at the Duke.

The Queen retired, removed her court robes, and dressed in simpler clothes, hurried back to the House of Lords to watch the debate incognita. Nottingham moved an amendment to the royal speech providing that no peace would be honorable or safe while any part of the Spanish dominions remained under the rule of any member of the House of Bourbon. That started the fight. Anne watched and listened breathlessly; the Tory leaders conferred in anxious whispers, counting votes; the Duke was very quiet.

But when Lord Anglesey declared that the nation could have made a satisfactory peace after the battle of Ramillies but for some persons whose interest it had been to prolong the war, the Duke rose.

He had all his accustomed dignity, but emotion was evident in his voice. He bowed gravely to where Anne sat. He said: "I appeal to the Queen whether, while I had the honor to serve Her Majesty as general and plenipotentiary, I did not constantly inform her and her council of all the proposals of peace that were made, and desire instructions for my conduct

on that subject. I can declare with a safe conscience, in the presence of Her Majesty, of this illustrious assembly, and of that Supreme Being Who is infinitely above all the powers upon earth, and before Whom in the ordinary course of nature I must soon appear to give an account of my actions, that I ever was desirous of a safe, honorable, and lasting peace; and was always very far from any design of prolonging the war for my own private advantage, as my enemies have most falsely insinuated. But at the same time I must take the liberty to declare that I can by no means give in to the measures that have been lately taken to enter into a negotiation of peace with France upon the foot of the seven Preliminary Articles, since I am of the same opinion with the rest of the Allies, that the safety and liberty of Europe will be in imminent danger if Spain and the West Indies are left to the House of Bourbon."

The amendment was passed by a vote of 62 to 54. The Whigs had won.

But it was a slim victory. The same amendment in the Commons, where the Tories were more firmly entrenched, was defeated by a vote of 350 to 126. And soon afterwards, in order to bring the House of Lords around to Harley's way of thinking, the Queen created twelve new peers in one batch. "Peers used to be made for services which they had done, but I should be made for services I was expected to do," observed stout old Sir Miles Wharton when one of these seats was offered to him. Sir Miles declined to accept. But twelve other men, one of them Abigail Hill's husband, were not so conscientious, and took their places amid a profound silence. "Will you vote singly, or through your foreman?" they were asked when the first division came.

The vituperation of the Duke continued. Added to the official charges, never officially pressed against him, were unofficial ones spread by a multitude of pamphlets. No mercy was shown, no decency. This man had raised England from a nation insignificant in war to the first military nation in the world. When he had become commander-in-chief of the army and navy England had shared the sea power equally with Holland and France, but now England alone was mistress of the Atlantic, and of the Mediterranean too. Before Jack Churchill had been given the helm England had been considered a minor nation in the councils of Europe, but now she was dictating policies everywhere and ranked with Austria and France as one of the very great powers. You would suppose that, even if they believed the charges of corruption whispered against him, the people would be willing to let him have that £280,000. Gibraltar alone was worth more than £280,000. Certainly sovereignty of the sea was worth many times that sum.

The pamphleteers, all hired pens, dragged out the ancient scandal about Barbara Palmer. They even accused him of cowardice!

One hot-headed fool went farther still. In the House of Lords, Earl Poulett spoke highly in praise of the Duke of Ormonde, who wanted to get Jack Churchill's job—who had always wanted it, and had been angry when William gave it to Churchill. "No one can doubt *Ormonde's* bravery," cried Poulett. "He is not like a certain general who led troops to the slaughter to cause a great number of officers to be knocked on the head in a battle, or against stone walls, in order to fill his pockets by the sale of their commissions."

Everybody looked at the Duke. He was perfectly quiet,

bland, serene as ever. He seemed not to have heard. But as soon as the session had adjourned, he sent Poulett a challenge. No man need suppose that just because Jack Churchill was sixty years old he feared a duel.

Unfortunately, Queen Anne heard about this affair and sternly forbade the meeting.

And on December 31, without any excuse at all, Queen Anne dismissed the Duke from all his public employments. She dropped the pilot. Why not? Harley had the wheel: he understood all about navigation. And Anne wanted to be a *real* queen.

Prince Eugene came to London two days later. He was, of course, distressed to learn of the Duke's fall. Indeed, all this came as a shock to Europe. The Emperor and the Dutch were in a panic, the Germans dumfounded, while Louis the Fourteenth made no secret of his delight.

Eugene had been sent to make sure that no separate peace negotiations were under way in England, as rumor asserted. He might have behaved coldly toward his old comrade, in order to court the friendship of those in power. But Eugene wasn't that sort. He told London frankly what he thought of a nation capable of such astounding ingratitude. At a dinner he was introduced by Harley as the greatest captain of the day. "If I am," he snapped, "it is because of what you did." And when, in a private conversation, the Prince stoutly declared that Jack Churchill was in all history without superior as a general, and somebody mentioned Alexander the Great, Eugene retorted: "Yes, but he didn't have any Dutch deputies with his army."

Eugene was assured that England would not think of deserting her Allies. Holland was assured of the same.

The Duke of Ormonde was made commander of the British contingent, but neither the Dutch nor the Austrians would accept him as commander-in-chief of all the Allied armies, and this title fell to Eugene. Incidentally, Ormonde accepted the two and one-half per cent. commission on foreign auxiliaries and the customary bonuses for bread and bread-wagon contracts, just as Jack Churchill had done. But no one objected in this case.

Ormonde had secret orders not to indulge in any real warfare. The road to Paris was open. Light cavalrymen were within forty miles of Versailles. The Sun King was packing, preparing to move in a hurry. But Ormonde was hopelessly slow, and the spirit was gone from the troops. Villars surprised them, cut them in half; he killed or wounded 8,000 at Denain; he recaptured Douai and Bouchain.

Then, when Eugene started into action, the Englishmen walked out. Ormonde had his orders. He could take no part in a battle or siege. The redcoats and the lads in kilts, heads hung, deserted their comrades at the critical hour. Ormonde ordered the German regiments in English pay to march off with them, but the Germans refused. "We fight for glory, not for money," they told him. An awful silence hung over the Allied camp that night. But it was as nothing compared with the silence in the British camp. Officers remained in their tents, not daring even to face the men. There were no songs. The camp women went begging for customers. No one took even the trouble to get drunk. An army—a tough, hard-bitten army of veterans—was blushing. Desertions had been no more than normal in times of danger; but now men of all ranks were deserting in large numbers and reënlisting under Dutch or Austrian standards. If Jack Churchill wasn't

BLENHEIM HOUSE.
Built at the Expence of the Publick, and Settled on the
DUKE of MALBOROUGH and His POSTERITY.

permitted to finish the job himself, they would do all they could to finish it for him! But they were beaten before they started. Eugene, stripped of a large portion of his army and with dissension and suspicion rife in the remainder of it, and, most important of all, deprived of the counsel of a calm, kindly old gentleman who looked like an overfed angel and fought like Lucifer's first lieutenant, was no match for Villars. The French, flushed with success, overran the countryside.

England made her peace. She gained Gibraltar, Minorca, recognition of Anne and of the Hanoverian succession, Acadia and Newfoundland and clear title to the Hudson's Bay settlements, the island of St. Kitts in the West Indies, certain special trade privileges, and a vague promise (backed by no securities at all) that the crowns of France and Spain at least would never be put on the same head. She took these things, and then permitted her allies to get what little was left. They called it, then, the Peace of Utrecht. Pitt later called it "the indelible reproach of the age."

The Germans, disgusted, went home. The French grew increasingly haughty, and their peace terms were raised and raised. Holland had no choice but to follow England; she got a few barrier fortresses, but not those which she had bargained for originally and which England had promised to get for her. Austria held out a little longer, but eventually Austria, too, was obliged to make peace. She got the Spanish Netherlands, Naples, Milan, and Sardinia.

Lille was restored to France. So was Bouchain, and so were Bethune, St. Venant, Aire, Landau, and many other places which Jack Churchill had worked so hard to capture. The Sun King never got down on his knees at all. In fact, although

beaten consistently by the Great Duke, he obtained better terms than he had really hoped for since the third or fourth year of the conflict.

It was called the War of the Spanish Succession, and its principal object was to keep a Bourbon from occupying the throne of Spain. But a Bourbon sat upon that throne even after the Peace of Utrecht. A Bourbon sits upon it to-day.

CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR

He Was a Great Man

THE rest is quickly told. The Duke fought the peace to the last ditch, and then prepared to withdraw from the country. "His inability to bear abuse as well as he did grapeshot was the greatest weakness of his character," writes Alison, one of his biographers. Perhaps. Assuredly he did not like to be slandered and spat upon right and left, day and night, by party fanatics and hired pamphleteers. The government took no criminal action against him, but a civil suit for £15,000 a year was brought on the ground that the bread and bread-wagon contract money was recoverable. This was absurd, and the government never hoped to collect; but the litigation was costly and annoying. In addition, the government refused to pay the workingmen for Blenheim palace—the "monument of gratitude"—and these workingmen were encouraged to sue the Duke himself for £30,000. Everything else possible was done to drive him away. Nothing was too low. Only when he applied for passports did the government become accommodating.

He lingered to be with his old friend Godolphin, his former tennis-playing companion, his Prime Minister. Godolphin died in September. Nervous, not very sagacious, but absolutely honest, he had been Lord Treasurer, off and on, for almost twenty years during the most lush graft period of English history; yet when he was dismissed by Anne, re-

fusing a £4,000 pension, his income was less than £1,000 a year; and when he died there was barely enough to bury him.

The Duke quit England on November 12 for Ostend. His continental tour was like a triumphal procession. Everywhere he went he was enthusiastically greeted. The people were as amazed by his quiet and modest bearing as they were that England could under any circumstances display such ingratitude. A strange people, the English.

In Vienna, however, where the Duke had reason to expect the greatest gratitude, he was denied one thing dear to his expectations. He wanted to take possession of his principality of Mindelheim. But, alas, by the peace terms which Austria had been obliged to make because of England's behavior, Mindelheim passed back to the Elector of Bavaria. Emperor Charles was profuse in his apologies and repeatedly assured the Great Duke that another principality, or at least the equivalent in cash, would be given him. This, however, was never done. Indeed, the Duke was never paid even a part of the £2,000 a year which he had been supposed to receive from Mindelheim before it reverted to the Bavarian.

The Duchess joined him in Frankfurt-am-Main early in 1713, and they lived there for about six months, then moved to Antwerp. They lived quietly, but they were at all times in close touch with the political situation.

Anne was near death. Who would get the throne?—the charming old lady in Germany, or the melancholy young man who *would* not cease being a Roman Catholic? Anne, growing more and more sentimental, inclined toward her half-brother. The Tories, as had been expected, were falling out among themselves. Harley and Bolingbroke were a queer pair in the first place: Harley cautious, conservative, a double-

dealer trying to please everybody and willing to stay friends with the Duke so long as the Duke would stay friends with him; and Bolingbroke brilliant, accomplished, a quick thinker who favored bold measures and was all for keeping the Duke's head under the political surface as long as possible. Harley favored the Hanoverian succession, though he corresponded with the Chevalier de St. George. Bolingbroke favored the legitimate line and did not care who knew it. Harley was the leader, but his power was waning.

Another volume would be required to record half the fascinating details of this duel. The Hanoverians, for the first time, were really worried, and although they still refused to commit themselves to either party, it was evident that they were ready to do anything they could to ascend the throne. The melancholy Catholic, tall and thin-faced like his father, was working ceaselessly, if not very cleverly, in his own cause. His forte was letter-writing, and he sat at his desk night and day. All the discontented elements were rallying round him; and Anne used to burst into tears every time she remembered him.

Jack Churchill still had pleasant words for the Jacobite spies, but his influence was all thrown to the old lady in Herrenhausen. Almost anything now, would turn the tide one way or the other. Bolingbroke, assisted by the Duke of Ormonde, was climbing steadily. Anne was getting more sentimental and more High Church every day. Harley's power was crumbling.

Then Sophia died, and the Duke thought it time to interfere. There was consternation in the Jacobite ranks when they learned that he was about to return to London.

Bolingbroke overthrew his former partner and rose to

be Prime Minister. He began to pack the Cabinet with Jacobites.

Four days later Anne died. The Duke heard this news on August 1, while he was at Ostend on his way to England.

The Jacobites wavered. Bishop Atterbury, an enthusiastic supporter of the Stuart, offered to go before the people in his full regalia and proclaim James King; and when the Jacobites still wavered, the good bishop gave them some decidedly unepiscopal words. Meanwhile the Whigs and the Hanoverian Tories had acted with alacrity and firmness. A man who could speak not a word of English was everywhere formally proclaimed King of Great Britain and Ireland.

A few days later the Great Duke landed at Dover. The nation abruptly decided that he was a fine old fellow after all. Crowds followed him wherever he went. There were salutes of cannon, greeting mayors and aldermen in their state robes, cries of "Long live the Duke!" and all the rest of it precisely as if he had come back from another Blenheim.

Soon afterward George of Hanover landed and took over the Crown. Quiet, shrewd, suspicious, fat, he did not make a good impression. He had little respect for Englishmen, and he made no effort to learn the language or adopt the customs of the islands. He favored the Whigs because they had been instrumental in bringing him over; but chiefly he favored his German friends, especially those of the weaker sex. He drank vast quantities of beer, and permitted the politicians and his mistresses to rule the nation. He was not interested, so long as they didn't interfere with his own pleasures, which were numerous and vulgar. His favorite females, dubbed "the Elephant" and "the Beanpole" because of their figures, did a big business in office-selling and title-selling. They were

even more unpopular than George himself. Once they were almost mobbed in the streets. On this occasion the Baroness of Kendal (the Elephant) thrust her head out of a carriage window and in broken English asked the reason for the murmurs:

"Good peoples, we have only come for all your goods!"

"Yes, damn you! And for all our chattels, too!"

George did not like the Great Duke, had never liked him. He was jealous of the man's military fame, and could never forget the way he had treated James the Second. But he knew him to be a first-rate soldier, head and shoulders above any other general of modern times; and his first signature as King of Great Britain and Ireland was affixed to a commission appointing Jack Churchill commander-in-chief again.

The Duke later resumed his office of Master of Ordnance. But although he occasionally reappeared at the House of Lords, he was never again active in politics. He was glad to have quiet. He refused to join the new Cabinet, and would have refused even to remain in charge of the military forces had not his friends and the new King begged him to serve.

The civil suits against him were dropped. Harley, Bolingbroke, and Ormonde were accused of high treason in dealing with the exiled Stuart. Bolingbroke and Ormonde left the country, but Harley weathered the storm, though he never again rose to political importance.

That same year the Duke's third daughter, Betty, died at the age of twenty-two. There were only two children left now of the original seven—Henrietta, who was Lady Godolphin, and the blue-eyed Anne, her father's favorite. Sarah, robbed of a Queen to scold, quarreled continually with her

own daughters and her grandchildren—a circumstance which pained the old general considerably.

The work on Blenheim continued, though the Duke had to pay for it himself. Vanbrugh, the architect, called it "a monument of ingratitude." The master came from London to examine it as often as his official duties would permit. Still handsome, riding like a man in his twenties, talking about plans in a girlish voice, always polite, always amiable, he was a familiar figure about the massy pile.

The army grew restless. Contractors had caused trouble by issuing shirts which fell apart at the third washing. Guardsmen paraded through London with these on the ends of poles, crying out against the German king. It sounds like a silly interlude, but George's position was extremely uncertain, the army alone could keep him in place, and there was only one person who could control the army.

Churchill faced them like a gently reproving professor. "I have had the honor to serve with some of you in a great many campaigns," he reminded them, "and I believe you will do me the justice to tell the world that I never willingly wronged any of you." That was true, and they knew it; no soldiers in the world got as good treatment. They listened, nodding, while he told them that they should always come to him with their professional troubles, instead of parading the streets in that undignified fashion. Nothing was too good for men who had fought as they had fought. He was ready at all times to listen to their complaints and see that justice was done them. Had he ever failed them in a crisis? (Shouts of "No! Never!") Had he not always treated them well? ("Yes! Yes!") Very solemnly the Great Duke gave a command that all the shirts in question should be recalled, piled

in a public place, and burned; and he signed contracts for another lot, the finest shirts any army in the world could boast. He issued orders also that the men should receive double rations of beer in honor of this event. The meeting broke up with cries of "Long live the Duke! God bless our Duke!"

The incident should not be laughed at, for Jacobite spies were thick in the army then, and Jacobite agents were busy in the government, and a less informal crisis was at hand.

A few months later another Stuart uprising failed. The fiery cross was carried from glen to remote glen in the Scottish Highlands; the bagpipes were sounded; the clans were raised. Marlborough, very ill, did not take the field in person. There were some skirmishing, a great deal of wasted marching and counter-marching, and a non-decisive battle. Melancholy James, taken off his guard by this insurrection in his own favor, hurried over from France, but arrived only in time to learn that it had died for lack of inspiration. A great many men were hanged, and some were drawn and quartered.

The Duke, though tired of warfare, did his duty as best he could. Nor was it inconsiderable; for more than any other individual, perhaps, he kept George on the throne. Large, very dignified, very quiet, he was the greatest obstacle with which the Jacobites had to contend. They knew it, as all their correspondence at this period attests.

The second daughter, blue-eyed Anne, lovely Anne, died in the Spring of 1716, at the age of twenty-nine. The Duke's broad shoulders sagged somewhat after this, for the first time. His walk was not so swift and firm. The time had come for him to die himself, and he was not reluctant. He was tired. The following month he suffered a paralytic stroke which

left him scarcely able to move. He recovered sufficiently to walk, even to ride slowly around the grounds at Blenheim. Sometimes he got into London for a public function or an appearance in the House of Lords. He was an awesome figure, so much greater than any other person of that day as to make comparison ridiculous. He was a national institution—*the* Duke. It cannot be said that the people loved him, for he had little of the common touch and never stooped to gallery gestures. But they trusted him, as the soldiers did; they knew that he was a great man, and they stood in respectful silence when he passed.

Sometimes they bought their way into Blenheim palace, tipping servants to permit them to peep between curtains, across an immense and majestically furnished room, where, in a corner before a fireplace, sat a still beautiful lady, her head tilted slightly to one side, reading letters from kings and emperors—reading them aloud to a once-mighty man, an impotent hulk inexplicably existing from an age long past. It was Jack and Sarah Churchill, the strangest couple in the world, still as much in love with one another as on the day they were married.

Astronomers can tell you the exact instant at which the sun sets on any given day. But for most of us the setting of the sun is less abrupt, less definite. Similarly historians tell you that John, first Duke of Marlborough, died on June 5, 1722. But his death was in fact a sunset—slow, measured, inexpressibly grand, and too beautiful for regret.

Bolingbroke himself said: "He is so great a man that I forget his faults." Let that be his epitaph.

All London attended the funeral. The King was there, and the Prince of Wales, and all the bigwigs in their splendid

robes. The casket was in an open carriage; above it was a full suit of armor, and on it were the names Blenheim, Ramillies, Oudenarde, Malplaquet, Schellenberg, Mons, Lille, Antwerp, Bouchain, Tournay, Ghent, Ostend, and the rest. Eight dukes and six earls carried the remains of Winston Churchill's eldest son into Westminster Abbey, where a Bishop chanted the customary words. Millions mourned, but the most sincere were the soldiers and the Duchess.

The Duchess lived on and on, fighting always. She fought with Vanbrugh about the completion of Blenheim; she fought with her own daughter, Henrietta; and bitterly she fought with all her grandchildren. She fought with the world, as she supposed, in defense of her husband's memory. She hired two literary hacks to concoct a sizable volume in justification of everything she herself had ever done at court —for she was not prepared to admit that she had ever done anything wrong or that any of her enemies had ever done anything right. She hired another hack to do a weighty official biography of her husband. Of course she fought with these hacks, too, telling them how they should perform their tasks. A multitude of illustrious suitors came to her, but they were all turned away. "If I was young and handsome again, and you should lay the empire of the world at my feet," she told one of them, a duke, "you would never share the heart and hand that once belonged to John Churchill." She had his body removed from Westminster Abbey, which she did not consider worthy of holding it, to the chapel at Blenheim.

She was eighty-four years old, when, still fighting with everybody and everything, still scolding the world because it did not properly appreciate the genius of her husband, she died.

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